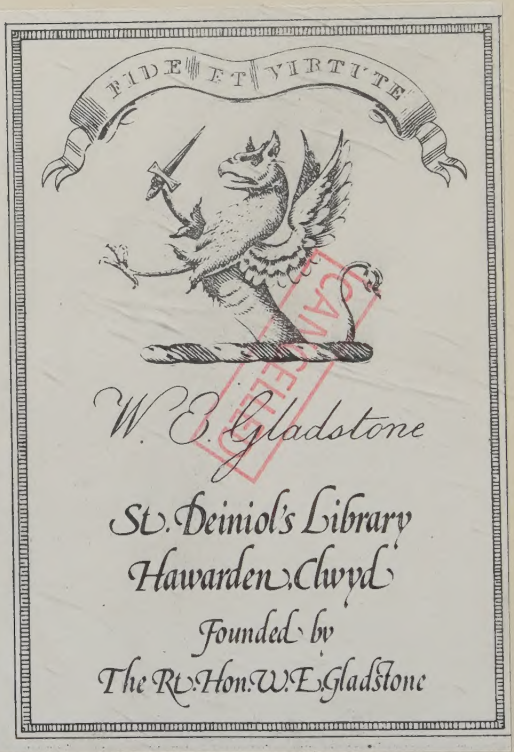
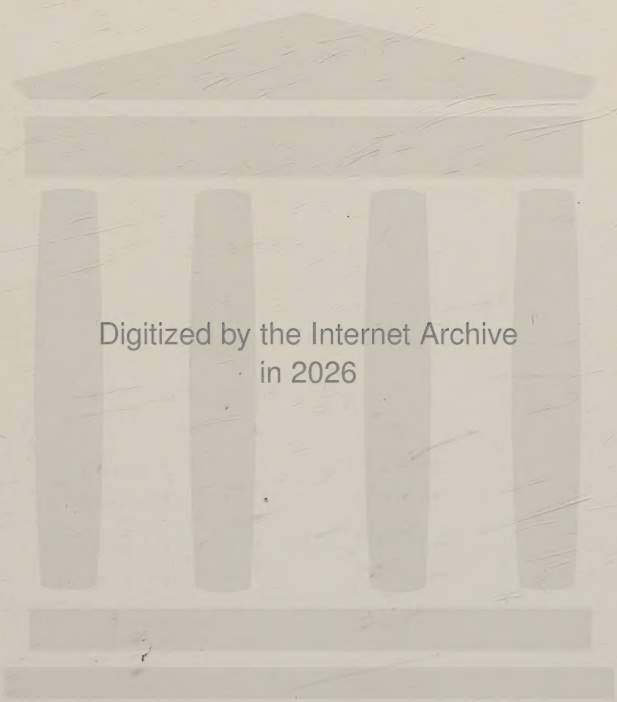

FIDE ET VIRTUTE
W. E. Gladstone
St. Deiniol's Library
Hawarden, Clwyd
Founded by
The Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone

.54
.25

F
29
13

ST. DEINIOL'S LIBRARY,
HAWARDEN

62 g
Union (Christian



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/religioninschool0000hhen

WORKS BY

Canon H. HENSLEY HENSON

8vo. 1*s. net.*

Sermon on the Death of Queen Victoria

Globe 8vo. 1*s. net.*

Sincerity and Subscription

A PLEA FOR TOLERATION IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

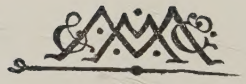
The Value of the Bible

AND OTHER SERMONS (1902-1904)

With a Letter to the Lord Bishop of London.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.

RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS



Religion in the Schools

ADDRESSES ON

Fundamental Christianity

DELIVERED IN S. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER
DURING LENT 1906

BY

H. HENSLEY HENSON
B.D., Hon. D.D. (Glasgow)
CANON OF WESTMINSTER, RECTOR OF S. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER
SOMETIME FELLOW OF ALL SOULS COLLEGE, OXFORD

London
MACMILLAN AND CO., Limited
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1906

All rights reserved

38357

GLYNNIOL'S LIBRARY.
HAWARDEN

PREFACE

The addresses here printed were delivered in S. Margaret's, Westminster, on Saturday afternoons during Lent, and they were designed to assist those who heard them towards a just estimate of the issues at stake in the renewed controversy about the system of elementary education. Since they were delivered Mr. Birrell has introduced the Education Bill, which aspires to provide a final settlement of the protracted and embittered conflict as to the place (if any) which religion shall have in the curriculum of the State-schools. The proposals of the Government appear to be honestly designed with a view to this object; and it is to be hoped that all who seriously desire to preserve the Christian basis and tendency of the national education will hesitate long before they are

induced to adopt an attitude of mere hostility towards them. An equitable distinction is drawn between the single-school areas and the urban districts, where there exists a choice of schools. In the latter some special arrangements are contemplated, which would have the effect of preserving, more or less completely, the denominational character of such schools as can be shown to be genuinely denominational, that is, which are attended by a large majority of the children of parents of a single denomination. In the denominational schools, which are by lease or purchase handed over to the local authorities, it will be possible for the denomination, which at present owns them, to secure facilities for giving denominational teaching on two days in the week. In all schools there will be "undenominational" teaching according to a syllabus drawn up by the local authorities. The financial arrangements appear to be just, and, when all the circumstances are considered, even generous. All religious or denominational tests are abolished in the case of the teachers, and no "facilities" are allowed in the case of

the schools, which have not been acquired from the denominations. Such are the main lines of the Bill as introduced by the Minister of Education. It is, at this stage, impossible to foresee what transformation it may undergo in its passage through Parliament, but I may be permitted to say that, if it preserves those main lines, it will provide in my judgment a working and substantially just arrangement, which the members of the National Church might receive with a good conscience. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon, that the nature and extent of the religious division of the English people have been greatly exaggerated by persons of opposite parties, who are almost equally interested in creating and keeping alive in the public mind the fiction of many denominations sharply severed by intractable beliefs. The Roman Catholic and the Anglo-Catholic unite with the secularist in urging that equal treatment of all denominations, which is clearly consistent only with the secularising of the schools. For there is a difference between the denominations. Roman and Anglican sacerdotalists are denominationalists of an

exclusive type, to whom association with other denominations is impossible for the sufficient reason, that to them the denomination is one of the essentials of Christianity. Protestant denominationalists are not thus exclusive, for the sufficient reason that to them the denomination is not an essential of Christianity, but a matter which lies fairly within the decision of a responsible Christian. Why must the Protestant be prohibited from common action with his co-religionists of other denominations than his own, because the non-Protestant, Roman, Anglican, or Jew makes a conscience of not doing so? Equal treatment of all denominations is an attractive plea, but in the mouth of an exclusive denominationalist it means the imposition on Protestants of the disabilities inseparable from that exclusiveness which is abhorrent to Protestant principles. It is agreed by all authorities that there has never been, and is not now, any religious difficulty within the schools. What is the reason of this happy exemption from conflict but the fact that the parents of the children who use the elementary schools, although of many

denominations, are yet almost all Protestant, and therefore well accustomed to frank religious association with one another? It is no doubt repugnant to equity that religious co-operation should be forced on those who conscientiously resent it; but why it should be prohibited to those who desire it passes my understanding. I confess to a certain indignation when I listen to denunciations of denominational conflict from men who are urging it as a reason for secularising the schools, the while the members of the denominations themselves — always excepting the small minorities of non-Protestants — are ready and eager to unite in what they are accustomed to describe as "undenominational religious teaching." It is indeed a strange way of meting out equal justice to all denominations to refuse at the bidding of a minority what the majority desire, and to impose on all precisely that which they all agree to repudiate!

Convinced as I am that the general desire of the nation is not favourable to secularism, and assuming that a truly national system must express that general desire, I rule out of my

consideration the proposal that the schools should be secularised; but I cannot conceal from myself the risk that this may be the result of the educational controversy unless a settlement on Christian lines can be reached quickly. Every fresh delay weakens the chance of a satisfactory solution of the problem; for it adds to the number of weary and wrathful citizens, who, while not themselves averse to Christianity, and more often than not rather favourable than otherwise, are not willing to allow a great national interest of the first importance to be for ever compromised by sectarian conflicts. I would venture to entreat my fellow-Anglicans to ask themselves what would be the probable result, if, by a combination of opposing interests, they could succeed in defeating the present proposals of the Government. Another Bill more satisfactory to them is not to be looked for from the present Government; they will never again have so fair a field for educational experiment as they had, and failed to use wisely, in 1902. Even if the improbable happened, and they could pass a measure after their own hearts, is it to be

supposed that the Nonconformists, who have succeeded in wrecking the former measure, would fail in wrecking the latter? It could not but happen that, after another disastrous period of agitation, the handling of the question would again fall to a Liberal Administration, and then is it doubtful what solution would be accepted? By adopting an irreconcilable attitude now, we are steering straight for secularism. If our real object throughout these long controversies has not been denominational advantage or supremacy, but the securing a Christian basis and conduct of the State-schools, then surely we ought to look ahead, and take thought for the probable consequences of our present action. Under this Bill, if it passed into law, the religious sentiment of the nation would have an opportunity of expressing itself; and then it would be the fault of the Churches if that opportunity were not fully used. The mere fact that, for the first time since 1870, the National Church exerted its vast influence—for, when all is said, the influence of the National Church is vast—in assisting and advancing the moral and

religious work of the State-schools, instead of belittling and misrepresenting it, would do more for the spiritual interest of the nation than all the formal securities which a partial legislature might confer. I apprehend that the National Church lies under a special obligation to take a broad view of the national interest, and not to act in the temper of a mere sect. To the Nonconformists I have no right to appeal, and yet I shall take leave to entreat them to consider the grave situation in which we stand. That the mass of serious Nonconformists in this country are strongly opposed to secularism I am convinced, but that the public course adopted by some of their leaders gives this impression cannot be honestly asserted. Both parties, indeed, in this unhappy conflict appear to suffer from the same ill fortune; both are strangely ill represented by their leaders. In my own mind I class together the exponents of Anglican sacerdotalism and the "fighting chiefs" of Nonconformity. As the one "exploit" in the interest of their sacerdotalism the name and influence of the Established Church, so do the

other "exploit" in the interest of their Liberationism the name and influence of the Nonconformist Churches. "Sacerdotalism" and "Liberationism" are perhaps equally remote from fundamental Christianity and from sound education. If the party leaders could on both sides be reduced to a salutary silence, and the real mind of the speechless masses behind them could find expression, I do not think there would be much delay in reaching the harmony we all profess to desire. Therefore I address myself to the laymen of the Churches, and beg them to think for themselves on this question, and to take their own course without heeding the exhortations of partisans however respectable or highly-placed.

I would even venture to entreat them to subject to criticism the phrases and shibboleths which have been generated in the course of this controversy, and in some cases appear to have acquired with those who use them the sacred and inviolable character of principles of action. "No test for teachers" is inscribed on the banners of the Liberal party, when all that can

reasonably be intended is no tests which are irrelevant, or irrational, or unjust. Tests of *efficiency* must be required of teachers: and tests of *character* can never be improper in the case of public officials charged with the delicate and important matter of education. When efficiency and character are secured, it may well be found that the main educational purpose of a religious or denominational test has been secured. "Undenominational" or "undogmatic" teaching of religion cannot reasonably mean teaching which excludes the fundamental postulates of Christianity. The "rights of parents" cannot reasonably be pressed so far as to impinge on the discipline of the school, or to defeat the settled policy of the community. There is again no reality in the platitude that "children are the children of parents and not of localities." Of course they are, but it is only as the citizens acting constitutionally within the autonomous locality that the parents can wield their legitimate influence on the course of the education which their children receive in the public elementary schools. The parent can no more

thrust himself across the threshold of the State-school and dictate his wishes to the teachers, than the ordinary citizen can force an entrance into the House of Commons and harangue the Speaker. Again, the unquestionable fact that the parents are well contented with the existing system, as well "undenominational" as "denominational," is not a complete defence of that system, although plainly a very weighty consideration. For the people who *use* the schools are only *one* of the two parties who must be satisfied. The people who *pay* for the schools are hardly less entitled to consideration. These parties overlap, but are by no means identical. That will not be a *practicable* settlement which disgusts the parents: nor will that be a *final* settlement which does not correspond with the general sentiment of the nation. The criticism of shibboleths and the analysis of platitudes are functions rarely popular in heated discussions, but none the less indispensable to reasonable discussion. It is because this educational controversy is more than commonly weighted with uncriticised shibboleths and unanalysed plati-

tudes that it is so extraordinarily difficult to gain a hearing for common-sense, or for fair play, or for religion, or for the "give and take" of reasonable politics.

H. HENSLEY HENSON.

April 10, 1906.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. Of Fundamental Christianity	1
2. Of the Bible as the Manual of Fundamental Christianity	18
3. Of the New Testament in the State-schools .	38
4. Of Undogmatic Christianity	57
5. Of the Teachers in the State-schools . .	78
6. Of the Duty of the National Church . .	97
Appendix	123

I

FUNDAMENTAL CHRISTIANITY

That Christians are sharply divided among themselves is unhappily notorious, and if evidence were necessary to show the extent of the mischief caused by the fact, it would perhaps be sufficiently provided by the title of the Addresses which I am beginning to-day. For surely there is something full of sinister suggestiveness in the circumstance that it should be requisite to remind Christian people that there are elements of the religion, which they all profess, which are necessarily common to them all, and which are immensely more important than the matters about which they differ from one another, and which ought therefore to form a bond of cohesion strong enough to resist the friction of such difference. From two sides, particularly, the notion of fundamental Chris-

tianity is disliked and repudiated. On the one hand, the avowed opponents of Christ's religion eagerly emphasise the divisions of its professors. Julian the Apostate has had many imitators in later times in the subtle course which he pursued when, designing the humiliation and enfeeblement of Christianity, he proclaimed a liberty of controversy to all Christian sects, and paraded their vehemence and uncharity. The exclusion of Christianity from the educational system of a Christian nation is constantly advocated among ourselves on the ground that any working agreement between the various descriptions of Christians is altogether impossible of attainment. On the other hand, with infinitely less excuse, the same disastrous policy is favoured by the adherents of exclusive denominationalism. If indeed it be seriously held that the Christian religion is capable of but a single legitimate denominational expression, that apart from some one ecclesiastical description there can be no valid discipleship, then of course the suggested distinction between fundamental Christianity and the distinctive beliefs of the indispensable denomination is altogether unreal. That no less than this

is the contention of the Roman Catholics, and of those Anglican churchmen who share the fundamental postulates of the Roman version of Christianity, cannot be denied, even when all fair allowance is made for the kindly sophistries, by which individual adherents of both sections reconcile the intolerable severity of their denominational creed with the evident facts of life. Theories of "uncovenanted mercies" or of "the spirit of the Church" may mitigate the inherent cruelty of ecclesiastical theory, and may render possible a cheerful acquiescence in the theoretical perdition of the mass of professing Christians, but they are powerless against the logic of exclusive denominationalism when the practical question of Christian co-operation is raised. Then the full rigour of the theory emerges, and obstructs the path of agreement. Accordingly we find that the deepest distrust and dislike are expressed among Roman Catholics and Anglican sacerdotalists whenever the suggestion is made that *the common element of fundamental Christianity should be disentangled, recognised, asserted, and enforced.* I must point out, therefore, at the beginning of these Addresses that they are mainly intended

for those Christians who are willing to admit in theory, what all Christians must admit in practice, that *the Christian religion is patient of many denominational expressions.* All Protestants clearly must admit so much, for their existence as Protestants implies it. If we may make the further assumption that the mass of English Christians are Protestants, then the discussion which we have announced will at least be relevant to the situation in this country. *Exclusive denominationalists, whether Roman Catholic or Anglican, may be left outside our immediate concern, since neither the one nor the other has any considerable following among the English people.* It is as irrational in itself, as it would surely be unfortunate in practice, to accept the exponents of exclusive denominationalism as competent to speak in the name of the general body of English Christians. Let me here make some observations on the familiar and uncouth word "undenominationalism," which, very unfortunately, has come to be generally used in recent discussions of the educational question. It will be within every one's recollection that this term has evoked the most vehement pro-

tests from some leaders of Anglicanism. It is treated as a positive version of Christianity, or no-Christianity, and contrasted with the current denominational versions. One eminent Anglican —the late Mr. Gladstone—carried away by the fervour of his rhetoric, described it as a "*moral monster*"; and this invidious description is now habitually repeated by lesser folk, who would perhaps be hard put to it if they were required to give an intelligible account of what the ugly phrase really means. If it be a sound rule in all discussions to make sure that the terms employed are employed in recognised senses, then it is clear that the discussions of "undenominationalism" have violated the first condition of serviceable debate. For it is certain that, while Anglican sacerdotalists have been denouncing, disproving, deriding the "moral monster," the vapid and futile "residuum," the Erastian dogmatic abortion—by which invidious descriptions they persuade themselves that they convey the true significance of "undenominationalism"—those who are accustomed to advocate the latter mean nothing of all this, but rather *something which every Christian must recognise as the most valuable and venerable*

thing in the world, the fundamental truths of Christ's religion. There is all the difference possible between a "foundation" and a "residuum." It is quite true that when you consider the numerous denominational variations of Christianity, and attempt to discover what is the common element in them all, by virtue of which they may all rightly claim the Christian name, you will be led to an analysis which will leave you finally with a residuum of common belief, apart from which Christianity in any effective sense cannot exist; and if you choose to isolate this residuum, and show it nakedly as what you mean by "undenominationalism," you will expose yourself to an easy overthrow at the hands of any competent denominational opponent. For that residuum will be a mere abstraction which never has existed and never can exist alone, which never has served and never can serve the purpose of the human spirit seeking such a version of the Divine Will as may inspire and direct its way. *Christianity is pre-eminently a social religion*, and therefore it must express itself in a religious society, and, in a most true sense, is inherently denominational. So far there can be no dif-

ference between Christians. But here emerges the salient fact of the existing religious situation. *This social aspect of the religion is no more restricted to a single denominational type than is the social aspect of humanity itself restricted to a single political type.* It is mere matter of fact that there are many forms of Christian polity, as there are many forms of civil polity. Yet there are fundamental principles of both, and these must be embodied in both, and in both cases the relative value of the form is determined by the fidelity with which it expresses the principles. There is, moreover, an order in which religious truths are to be learned, and that order is not arbitrary but natural, and cannot be violated without peril of grave mischief. In every subject, whether sacred or secular, there are elements which must be mastered, and with respect to which no controversy can be tolerated. In the case of no subject are the elements a futile residuum which has value in itself apart from something, as yet distant, which must be added in due time. In every case the elements are taught as the indispensable foundation of something else which in later years will be built thereupon. Are there, then, or are there not,

ST DEINIOL'S LIBRARY

elements of Christianity, which are indispensable and non-controversial, and which must form the foundation of every legitimate denominational expression of Christianity? If there are such elements, then, is it not evident that these ought to constitute the religious instruction which is to be given in the public schools of a Christian nation to the children of parents who belong to many Christian denominations? I go further, and I ask whether, in the interests of the denominations themselves, anything else can be desired? I notice, indeed, a form of speech not uncommon at the present time which seems to disallow this. We desire, it is said, generally by persons who deny the legitimacy of any denomination other than their own, that the result of the elementary education should be to improve the quality of the denominationalism to which the children are hereditarily attached. The Anglican is to become a better Anglican; the Congregationalist a better Congregationalist; the Methodist a better Methodist, and so on. *The inference which is suggested is that therefore the elementary education must itself be denominational.* I would point out, however, that if the spiritual quality of a Christian

denomination be really determined by the fidelity with which it expresses fundamental Christian principles, then no service can be rendered to any denomination more necessary and more precious than this, which the non-denominational grounding of its members might seem competent to render. For no serious denominationalist will dispute that there is a grave risk that, in the ardour of that limited and secondary allegiance which Christians acknowledge to their denomination, they should fall short of the larger and primary loyalty they owe to Christ Himself. *What party-spirit is in national politics that denominational zeal may easily become in the sphere of religion.* Nothing could more effectively serve the interest of the spiritual efficiency of the denominations than their acceptance for all their members of a common instruction in the fundamental truths which they all hold in common. I submit, therefore, that no injustice is done to any Christian denomination by restricting the public religious instruction given to children in the State-schools to the indispensable elements of Christianity. If, therefore, I reject the uncouth term "undenominationalism" and prefer the

less confusing term "fundamental," it is because the former has gathered about itself the most exasperating associations, while the latter carries its meaning on its surface. The notion of a fundamental Christianity common to all denominations of Christians has within recent years been emphatically asserted. Let me strengthen my argument with three examples. In 1888 the Royal Commission on the Elementary Education Acts included in its report the following declaration :—

> "That *the only safe foundation* on which to construct a theory of morals or to secure high moral conduct, is the religion which our Lord Jesus Christ has taught the world. That as we look to the Bible for instruction concerning morals, and take its words for the declaration of what is morality, so we look to the same inspired source for the sanctions by which men may be led to practise what is there taught, and for instruction concerning the helps by which they may be enabled to do what they have learned to be right."

This declaration was signed by eminent representatives of the Church of England, of the Roman Catholic Church, and of the Nonconformist Churches, and it is a declaration in favour of fundamental Christianity.

In 1898 the *Evangelical Free Church Catechism* was published with a preface by the late Mr. Hugh Price Hughes. In that preface we learn that the object of the compilation was to

> "exhibit the substantial agreement of the Evangelical Free Churches *in relation to the fundamental and essential truths of Christianity.* The great object of the Committee has been to express the Christian *doctrines held in common by all Evangelical Free Churches.* The theologians who have prepared this Catechism represent, directly or indirectly, the beliefs of not less, and probably many more, than sixty millions of avowed Christians in all parts of the world. Students of history will be aware that no such combined statement of international belief has ever previously been attempted, much less achieved, since the lamentable

day when Martin Luther contended with Huldreich Zwingli. In view of the distressing controversies of our forefathers, it is profoundly significant and gladdening to be able to add that every question and every answer in this Catechism has been finally adopted without a dissentient vote."

The compilers are named in the preface. They included representatives of the eight denominations, which include in their membership almost the whole of the English Nonconformists: and it is interesting to see the well-known names of Dr. Guinness Rogers, Dr. Clifford, and Dr. Munro Gibson in the list. The National Church had no part in the compilation of this catechism, presumably because it possessed already a statement of fundamental Christianity in its own catechism. It would be time well spent for any one who is disposed to credit the violent accounts of their doctrinal divergence, which are too often set before the public by Anglicans and Nonconformists, to be at the pains to compare these two catechisms. For myself, I can honestly say that, after reading the Free Church Catechism

over thoughtfully more than once, I cannot discover a single answer which seems to me properly inconsistent with the Church Catechism, or unacceptable to the mass of English Churchmen.

In 1905 there was published in Jamaica yet another catechism designed to demonstrate the reality of that common basis of fundamental Christianity on which all the evangelical denominations rested. The compilers of this catechism included the Archbishop of the West Indies, and therefore we may treat this compilation as carrying the authority of the Anglican hierarchy. Let me quote one paragraph from the preface.

> "While this catechism frankly recognises the substantial differences between Christians on some important matters, and does not attempt to explain them away, but leaves those controversial doctrines to be taught elsewhere than in the day school, it as frankly teaches and emphasises *the large mass of Christian doctrine and moral teaching commonly held by most, if not by all Christians.* The compilers are convinced

that it is good to bring this phase of the matter into prominence, and secure for the rising generation the benefit of that unity of opinion and teaching which exists."

These catechisms give by no means the most impressive demonstrations of the fundamental agreement of English Christians. If you enter the study of any clergyman, whatever his denominational description, you will find his book-shelves filled with the same books, and these composed by the scholars of all the churches. If you join the worship of any English congregation, you will find the favourite hymns and chapters are the same. Cardinal Newman's "Lead, kindly Light," and Faber's "Hark! hark! my soul," are as fervently sung by Nonconformists, nay, more so, than by Roman Catholics. Even the most denominational of hymn-books has perforce to yield to the superior authority of that fundamental Christianity which inspires Christian praise. It is much the same when from books, prayers, hymns, you pass to the sermons. One of the most widely circulated of newspapers is the *Christian World Pulpit*; it is read by Anglicans and by Nonconformists

equally; it publishes impartially the sermons of all varieties of Protestant preachers. No one can glance through the pages of this useful witness to the underlying agreement of Christians without being struck by the substantial oneness of the teaching which is being given in the churches of all the Protestant denominations. Who remembers that John Bunyan was a Baptist? or that Thomas à Kempis was a Roman Catholic? or that Jeremy Taylor was an Anglican? or that Richard Baxter was a Puritan? These denominational characters are submerged and lost from view in the greater fact that all these great and holy men uttered a more profound, a more Catholic version of Christian truth, that which was common to all the denominations and made them Christian. It is something gained if we can persuade Christians generally to bethink themselves of their agreement, and to place their denominational preferences in that position of secondary and subordinate importance, which a very little reflection makes clear is all that properly belongs to them. There would be no breach of Christian charity implied in the indulgence of legitimate denominational preferences, no "sin of schism" implicit in the

religious emulation of many varieties of ecclesiastical organisation, *if only the fact and the primacy of fundamental Christianity were kept in mind.* A federation of variously constituted Churches linked in sacramental communion, and combining in the great undertakings of religious and social work, is at least as satisfactory a realisation of the visible oneness of the Christian society as a single spiritual empire despotically governed. It is, I believe, towards such a federation of variously constituted Churches that, in the English-speaking sphere, we are tending, and I am sure that nothing could more advance the good cause than *a system of national education which included in its normal course instruction in fundamental Christianity, and which was conducted throughout in the temper of the New Testament.* At this juncture there appears more than an ordinary measure of truth in the familiar phrase which is on men's lips. We are as a nation at the parting of the ways. On the one hand, disgusted with the virulence and impracticableness of a demented denominationalism, the statesmen, with whom the framing of an educational settlement now lies, may come to the lamentable decision that

Christianity shall have no place in the schools of a Christian nation. On the other hand, resolutely ignoring the superficial divisions, and addressing themselves to the deep agreement of Christians in fundamental religious truths, they may take a wiser course, and build their system of public education on the only sound basis, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. If this shall happen, the benefit will not be restricted to the schools: it will extend throughout the whole community. *Christianity will again be seen to be, not the solvent, but the cement of society.* Here, then, I will draw rein to-day. Enough has been said to show that there is no inherent absurdity in the notion of Fundamental Christianity, but rather that all Protestants are committed to the belief that Fundamental Christianity not only has a real existence, but is far more important than the divergent beliefs which give distinctiveness to the denominations. I hope, also, that enough has been said to show that by the uncouth phrase, "undenominationalism," serious Christians do not mean a "moral monster," or a mere abstract "residuum," but nothing less intelligible and less important than Fundamental Christianity itself.

II

OF THE BIBLE AS THE MANUAL OF FUNDAMENTAL CHRISTIANITY

It may be urged that however theoretically reasonable may be the insistence on Fundamental Christianity as the proper subject-matter of religious teaching in the State-schools of a Christian nation, yet in practice such teaching will be found impracticable for want of an universally accepted manual or summary of Fundamental Christianity. I propose, therefore, to show that we possess in the Bible, and therein principally in the New Testament, precisely what is wanted. The Bible fulfils the conditions which, in a satisfactory manual of Fundamental Christianity, must be satisfied. It is universally accepted as authoritative; it is by all Protestant denominations offered as the sufficient rule of faith and life; it is habitually used in the worship and teaching of all denominations;

it is generally revered by the people, and has permeated the language and literature of the English-speaking races so completely that it cannot without violence and absurdity be ignored in an English system of education. It may be added that the Bible is, by all competent teachers, declared to possess certain qualities of its own, which constitute it uniquely well-adapted for use as an instrument for the moral training of the young.

At the forefront of my Address I will read and adopt the grave and weighty words of that Anglican divine who, more than any other, deserves the title of "the Father of the English Reformation," and whose mild and tolerant spirit breathes ever in the language of the English Liturgy, Thomas Cranmer. In the prologue or preface to the Great Bible he writes thus:—

> "Wherefore in few words to comprehend the largeness and utility of the Scripture, how it containeth fruitful instruction and erudition for every man; if anything be necessary to be learned, of the holy Scripture we may learn it. If falsehood shall be

reproved, thereof we may gather wherewithal. If anything be to be corrected and amended, if there need any exhortation or consolation, of the Scripture we may well learn. In the Scriptures be the fat pastures of the soul; therein is no venomous meat, no unwholesome thing; they be the very dainty and pure feeding. He that is ignorant shall find there what he should learn. He that is a perverse sinner shall there find his damnation, to make him to tremble for fear. He that laboureth to serve God shall find there his glory, and the promissions of eternal life, exhorting him more diligently to labour. Herein may princes learn how to govern their subjects: subjects, obedience, love, and dread to their princes. Husbands how they should behave them unto their wives, how to educate their children and servants; and contrary, the wives, children, and servants may know their duty to their husbands, parents, and masters. Here may all manner of persons, men, women, young, old, learned, unlearned, rich, poor, priests, laymen, lords, ladies, officers, tenants, and mean men, virgins,

> wives, widows, lawyers, merchants, artificers, husbandmen, and all manner of persons of what estate or condition soever they be, may in this book learn all things what they ought to believe, what they ought to do, and what they should not do, as well concerning Almighty God, as also concerning themselves and all other. Briefly, to the reading of the Scripture none can be enemy, but that either be so sick that they love not to hear of any medicine; or else that be so ignorant, that they know not Scripture to be the most healthful medicine."—Vide *Works*, vol. ii. p. 111.

It is important to emphasise the point that the primacy which it is proposed to give the Bible in the State-schools accords precisely with the doctrine of the Church of England. It is not for one moment denied that there are other authorities recognised by that Church, and that in a complete religious education these would have their place, but my contention is that the position allotted to the Bible by the system of the English Church demands that in the first place, as the basis of everything else, there should be a thorough teaching of the Bible,

and that the child should be taught to regard the Bible as the Supreme Court of Appeal alike in matters of faith and in matters of conduct. How important it is to emphasise this may be inferred from the unfortunate declarations which are frequently issued from ecclesiastical quarters, and tend to give the impression that it is seriously held by Anglicans that the treatment of the Bible as the primary authority implies some wrong to Anglican principles. An example is ready to my hand in the Report of the Rochester Diocesan Board of Education. I quote from the *Times* of last Tuesday (March 6, 1906):

> "The Board would fail in their duty, they think, if they did not indicate the principles which Churchmen should hold fast. They must repudiate the assumption that instruction in Bible history, morals, and ethics [*sic*] constitute a Christian education. A Christian education is one which treats children as Christ would have treated them."

You will observe the confusion of mind which runs through this declaration. No sane, and certainly no responsible man ever suggested that

"instruction in Bible history, morals, and ethics constitute a Christian education"; but that such instruction is an indispensable element in such an education I apprehend no reasonable man will dispute, and that it is, in the order of Christian teaching, the element which ought to have a primary place, I think no Protestant Christian will doubt. Instruction in the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, it may be said with equal truth and irrelevance, does not constitute a Christian education, but that circumstance does not disprove the very sound contention that, at a certain stage in Christian education, the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist must have its place. There is a reasonable order in Christian education, and a natural propriety in the allocation of their respective shares to the family, the school, and the Church. The school cannot undertake the functions of the family, nor can it supplant the Church. Under all the circumstances of the national life, a very great and, in some respects, with reference to large numbers of the children, an abnormal importance must attach to the share of the school in the general scheme of education. The essential elements of moral and religious training must be secured in the State-schools, or

there is great probability that they will never be secured at all. The practical question is how, without violating the principles of any Christian denomination, those elements can be taught; and the only answer which has commended itself to any considerable body of considering men, is this which I am defending here. The teaching of the Bible secures the teaching of the fundamentals of Christian faith and morals, and starts the children with a veneration for the Bible as a greater authority than any other accessible to men, an authority which all Protestant Churches acknowledge, and to which all have recourse for the justification of their claim to teach truly the religion of Christ. This mental attitude, I submit, is precisely that which all the Protestant Churches maintain, and conspicuously among them the Church of England, which has ever gloried in the paramount position which the Bible holds, alike in its formal system and in its public worship. From an English Churchman's standpoint, it would be hard to find a better use, to which to devote the first hour of teaching in the State-schools, than a sound instruction in the history, faith, and morals of the Bible.

I would entreat serious Anglicans to reflect on the declared principles of their own Church before they lend themselves to a depreciation or repudiation of Bible teaching in the State-schools, as if such teaching sinned against some Anglican principle. Take the Thirty-nine Articles, which all must allow to have an authoritative character when the distinctive principles of the Anglican Church are in question. The VIth Article affirms "the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for salvation." This Article was expressly designed to disallow the Tridentine Doctrine as to tradition. The Roman Church postulated two co-equal authorities, Scripture and Tradition. Fundamental Christianity, on the Roman hypothesis, might be based on either of these: on the Anglican hypothesis it could be based on Scripture only. The opening words of the homily on Holy Scripture, which appears to have been written by Cranmer, are effectively adduced by Bishop Harold Browne, in illustration of the Article:

> "Unto a Christian man there can be nothing either more necessary or profitable than the knowledge of Holy Scripture, for-

asmuch as in it is contained God's true Word, setting forth His glory and also man's duty, and there is no truth nor doctrine necessary for our justification and everlasting salvation, but that is, or may be, drawn out of that fountain and well of truth."

The VIIIth Article sets the Scripture above the Creeds, which are entitled to Christian belief only as being provable by Holy Scripture. The XXth Article explicitly sets the Bible above the Church.

> "The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and keeper of holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of Salvation."

Bishop Harold Browne's observation on this

Article may well be quoted, as a clear statement on the part of an accredited representative of Anglicanism with respect to the primacy of Scripture:

> "Hence we may see that the Article determines that there is but one supreme primary authority, that is to say, the written tradition of the Will of God, the Holy Scriptures, His lively oracles. The authority of the Church is ministerial and declaratory, not absolute and supreme. And the decisions of the Church must always be guided by, and dependent on, the statements and injunctions of the written Word of God."

The XXIst Article roundly declares that "things ordained by General Councils as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture."

The XXIInd Article disallows the Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping, and Adoration, as well of Images as of Reliques, and also Invocation of Saints as "a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather

repugnant to the Word of God." The use of the Latin Tongue in public worship is rejected as "a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God" by Article XXIV. Transubstantiation is similarly declared in Article XXVIII. to be "repugnant to the plain words of Scripture."

You will not misunderstand the argument which I am developing. It is urged on the Anglican side very frequently that the teaching of the Bible in the State-schools as the manual of Fundamental Christianity may be satisfactory to Nonconformists, but is unjust to Anglicans, because it starts the children with a mental habit favourable to the former but not to the latter. In other words, that the solitary grandeur in which the Bible is exhibited, tends to create a disposition unfriendly to Anglicanism. I meet this argument by showing that it is a cardinal doctrine of the English Church that the Bible should so be regarded, and that the child who has been taught to regard the Bible as the source of religious truth and the Divine rule of conduct will have learned the very pre-suppositions of Anglicanism. If the Bible were excluded from the State-schools, and the children of the poor were left to form their

religious notions elsewhere, the Church of England in common with the other Protestant Churches would be greatly the loser.

I am compelled to use the term "Protestant" at every turn, because it is undoubtedly the case that from the standpoint of the Roman Catholic this insistence on the Bible as the manual of Fundamental Christianity must be extremely disagreeable. It is mere matter of fact that the Roman Catholic Church stands on another principle. The co-equal authority of Scripture and Tradition, and the subordination of both to an Infallible Church uttering its deliberate mind in all matters of faith and morals through an Infallible Pontiff are postulates which have effectually separated the Roman Catholic System, both in appearance and in "atmosphere," from the Evangelical Churches. There is no uncharity, and there is very manifest reason, in emphasising the fact that, from their respective postulates, the extreme divergence of educational policy, which is now one of the most embarrassing elements in the present situation, is logically inevitable. "Assuredly," writes the late Provost Salmon in his powerful and fascinating volume on *The Infallibility of*

the Church—a book which certainly ought to be included in the list of works which must be read by every Candidate for Holy Orders in the Church of England, since in these days it is probably excessive to hope that the reading of Chillingworth's great work, which may be said to cover the same ground, can be secured—"assuredly, if we desire to preserve our people from defection to Romanism, there is no better safeguard than familiarity with Holy Scripture; . . . the whole mental attitude of one who comes direct to the Bible for guidance, praying that God's Holy Spirit will enable him to understand it, is opposed to the Romish System, which renders difficult all real direct access between the soul and God, through the interposition of countless mediators both in interpreting God's Will to us and in making known our desires to Him" (p. 11). Now, if this be true, as I believe it is, then it is altogether unreasonable to expect that Roman Catholics should accept the teaching of the Bible as a satisfactory method of grounding children in Fundamental Christianity. It may be necessary to sacrifice symmetry of system in order to secure justice. I am one who so venerates

religious Conviction that, even when I am constrained to think that great public risks attend a policy of tolerance and equal treatment, I cannot bring myself to acquiesce in any wounding of the individual conscience. However inconvenient it may be, I assume as a self-evident fact that the Roman Catholics cannot be brought into a common system of religious teaching. Protestants require the acceptance of the Bible as the manual of elementary religious instruction; Roman Catholics with equal propriety refuse such acceptance. What is true of Roman Catholics is also true of those Anglicans who share the Roman Catholic postulates, and if they were a really considerable proportion of the parents whose children use the State-schools, it would be vain to hope that any common system of Biblical teaching would satisfy them. It is because I am persuaded that the overwhelming majority of English folk are, either by definite conviction or by hereditary sentiment, Protestant, that I press the practicableness and the wisdom of making the Bible the basis of the moral and religious teaching given in the State-schools. The conscientious demands of the non-Protestant minorities, Roman

and Anglican, must be fairly met; but they must not be allowed to wreck the national settlement.

Limiting myself, then, to the case of the Protestant churches, and assuming that the legitimate conscientious claims of the non-Protestant minorities will be satisfied, so far as they can be satisfied, by special arrangements which will not disturb the national settlement, I desire to make a few observations on a practical difficulty, which suggests itself when the Bible is proposed as the instrument of teaching Fundamental Christianity. How are you to avoid eccentricities of interpretation? Granting that the Bible is universally accepted as the supreme authority in religion, still it remains the case that the Bible is very variously understood, and the equal treatment, which seems to be secured by establishing the Bible as the manual of religious and moral instruction, may be destroyed by the senses placed upon the Bible. This difficulty has at first view a sufficiently formidable appearance; I think, however, there are considerations which go far to reduce its gravity, and perhaps to remove it altogether.

In the first place, it must be remembered

that the Bible is to be taught to *children*—in many cases children of tender years, in all cases children under the age of fifteen. The nature of the teaching will be necessarily determined by this circumstance. No sane teacher would introduce children to the perplexing and futile excitements of controversy. Elementary truths are also unquestioned and unquestionable truths, if not absolutely, yet certainly in their relation to those who are being taught them. The *didactic instinct* of the teachers may be relied upon not to insult the undeveloped intelligence of children with anything regarded by the teachers themselves as fairly questionable, and known to be questioned. Now nothing is more certain than the existence of a general religious agreement among Evangelical Christians (such as *ex hypothesi* form the immense majority of the English people, and therefore of the teachers who are closely representative of the classes from which they come), a general agreement, I say, as to the main lines of religious belief. The subjects of denominational differences are very well known, and none of them would be—apart from fanaticism, which we need not assume—*deliberately* introduced into

the Bible teaching; and as surely none of them would be *unwittingly* introduced.

In the next place, the character of the Bible facilitates a non-controversial teaching of it; and such teaching appears to be properly required in the first instance. Controversial interpretations may have their place at a later stage in the study of the Bible, but in the elementary stage, which alone is in question when the teaching in the State-schools is considered, these do not really come in. There are some words of the late Bishop Westcott, which though originally written in a different connection, will illustrate my meaning:—

> "The Bible may be treated historically or theologically. Neither treatment is complete in itself; but the treatments are separable; and, here, as elsewhere, the historical foundation rightly precedes and underlies the theological interpretation. The Bible has suffered, and is in danger of suffering more, from the inversion of this order."[1]

Now to a very great extent the treatment of the Bible in elementary schools must be

[1] Vide *The Bible in the Church*, p. viii.

historical and not theological. The children are to be taught the famous stories of the Old Testament, the main lines of the sacred narrative, the psalms and prophecies which are the classics of universal religion, as well as the preparatory teachings which led the way to the Gospel. There is no room for controversy in all this. The main purpose of all historical teaching of the Bible is twofold. On the one hand, it will be educational in relation to the intelligence; since apart from such knowledge of the Old Testament, it will be scarcely possible justly to understand the New. On the other hand, it will be educational in relation to the conscience; since the broad lines of moral obligation are clearly laid down in the Old Testament, and effectively illustrated in personal histories of unequalled power and beauty.

In the third place, the Bible will not be taught according to the whim of the individual teacher, but according to a syllabus framed by responsible and competent authority, with the express design of securing an effective teaching of the children. Finally, the Bible will be taught to children who, in most cases, though unhappily by no means in all, will come from

Christian homes, and be attached by hereditary ties to Christian churches. The broadly Christian character of the daily Scripture lesson will be effectively guaranteed by its association with these concurrent streams of Christian influence. These streams will affect the teachers not less than the taught, and they will serve to guard the spiritual quality of the school teaching a hundredfold more effectively than the futile tests which are clamoured for in some quarters. If but we could secure the honest and thorough teaching of the Bible within the schools, and the sympathy and goodwill of the Christian Churches without the schools, I for one would desire no better security for the moral and religious quality of the education provided by the State at the public cost. Sure I am that the whole course of instruction would be improved by this element of Bible teaching, for — if I may adopt some stately words of Richard Hooker—

> "We acknowledge that, as well for particular application to special occasions as also in other manifold respects, infinite treasures of wisdom are over and besides abundantly

to be found in the Holy Scripture; yea, that scarcely there is any noble part of knowledge, worthy the mind of man, but from thence it may have some direction and light."[1]

[1] Vide *Eccl. Polity*, bk. iii. chap. iv. p. 1.

III

OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN THE STATE-SCHOOLS

The main consideration which is to determine our view of the issues before us, when a system of national education is debated, ought surely to be the national interest. If indeed the Christian religion be—as all sincere Christians cannot but believe—the very truth of God, then the ultimate interest of the nation will be found to be identical with the requirements of Christ's Gospel; but we may reverse the order of the argument, and seek first what the well-being of the nation demands, and, in that case, we shall, in proportion to the success of our search, come out at conclusions, which are fundamentally Christian. I shall, therefore, place in the forefront of my discussion the question, What concern the State has in the teaching of the New Testament in the common schools? and then I

shall go on to consider how such teaching of the New Testament in the State-schools by teachers, who are State functionaries, affects the interests of the Christian churches.

It is matter of general agreement that Western civilisation has taken its distinctive character under the influence of the Christian religion. The question is often raised, indeed there has grown up a whole literature on the subject, what has been the effect of Christianity in human society. Extraordinary difficulty attaches to such an inquiry, for the chalice of life is wonderfully mingled, and it is hard to separate the ingredients, and allot to each its specific share in the final result. Race, habitat, climate, the circumstances of experience, the mysterious power of individual men—all have their part in creating that strange amalgam of ideas, institutions, traditions, relationships, which are gathered up in the notion of civilisation. Perhaps, however, the most useful method of pursuing the inquiry is to contrast Western civilisation with the other civilisations, præ-Christian and non-Christian, which are comparable with it. The distinctive effect of Christianity may well be recognised in those elements

which are found to be either unique, or in extent of influence unparalleled. Now if this course be adopted, it will certainly be found that the characteristic traits of Western civilisation are precisely those which appear to stand in manifest connection with the ideas of the New Testament. The strong sense of the rights of the individual, the restless spirit of reform and progress, the widely diffused spirit of humanity which softens manners and laws, and even mitigates the cruelty of economic strife, the universal veneration paid to unselfish service, the exalted standard of female chastity, and the respect for the weakness and innocence of children, which must be allowed, in spite of much that is incongruous and deplorable, to distinguish Christendom, are all clearly so congruous with the New Testament as to appear almost like a summary of its ethical doctrine. Moreover, every student knows that all these gracious features of Western civilisation have been in the past, and are still, directly connected with the profession of the religion of Christ. It is not excessive to say, in view of the past and of the present, that the best elements in the mingled tradition of civilisation are precisely the most evidently Chris-

tian. Observe that this cannot be said of ecclesiastical dogmas and institutions. I have often reflected that the gravest indictment of Christianity is that which, if the assumption of ecclesiastical zealots be allowed, and, at their bidding, the Gospel be identified with the official versions of it, may be built on the monstrous and continuing evils, which have flowed into human life from the religion of Christ. Persecution in its worst and most degrading forms, superstition the most abject, tyranny the most cruel, hypocrisy the most insolent, arrogance the most exasperating,—these—it might be said with large justification—have been the familiars of the Christian hierarchies. But all these have their counterpart and parallel outside the Christian sphere, and if, within that sphere, they have all taken an aggravated form, it is because there they have always been patently violations of the sacred interest with which they were associated. When, however, we trace the influence of the New Testament, that is, of course, the influence of the record of Jesus Christ's character and example, we find that it is as the Gulf Stream in the ocean, a salutary and beneficent power, bringing warmth and fertility wherever it comes.

I can understand a thoughtful citizen coming to the conclusion that the interest of patriotism was well served by restricting the range of ecclesiastical activity, but I cannot understand any one, who has considered the past and studied the present, deliberately consenting to the loss of the moral influence of the New Testament. It requires but a sober judgment and a vigilant eye to decide that, at the present time, there are very special reasons why so grave an impoverishment of the forces of the national morality should not be risked. For Western civilisation appears to be confronted with problems which will tax its moral resources to the utmost. There are "Signs of the Times" which no prudent man, and no patriotic citizen can afford to neglect. Society is at one of its recurrent crises of transition, and there is this circumstance which gives peculiar gravity to the situation, that the unprecedented scale of modern communities, and their intimate mutual connections, give an almost universal range to whatever catastrophe may overtake a modern civilised state. What is the burden of the warnings which are uttered by every authoritative voice, whether of statesman, or of social student, or of man of

science, or of moral teacher? Is it not that character is declining before the subtly hostile influences of urban life, that whole classes of the community are lapsing back into a worse than pagan animalism, that materialism with its tragic shadows of insanity and suicide is ravaging the idle and wealthy sections of society, and that generally the conditions, under which men work and live, are equally unfavourable to individuality and to independence? And is it not the case that while these malignant tendencies are active among us, the responsibilities of civic action steadily increase? Who did not read without a wondering fear the accounts of the imperial census which have filled the newspapers? More than one-fourth of the human race is governed by the democracy of Great Britain. The King of England reigns over subjects, who outnumber six times over the inhabitants of the Roman Empire at its widest extent. Assuredly the time is ill chosen for suggesting that the most effectual and beneficent instrument of moral influence which the experience of our race has known—and the New Testament is nothing less—should be struck out of the teacher's hand when he attempts to

fashion the character of the English child. It is but too easy to forget the precariousness of the tenure which society has of its own highest beliefs and habitudes. Every generation, as it comes on to the scene of history, has to master for itself the principles of morality, and to subject its practice to the yoke of discipline. When society exists in a comparatively stationary state, fulfilling its life in well-accustomed grooves, following unquestioned and universally familiar precedents, there seems something inevitable about the process of moral education ; but when all things are changing, and from multitudes of citizens the normal disciplinary conditions of civilised life are withdrawn, then—and this beyond question is our case—there is the greatest risk lest, through mere inadvertence, and as it were unconsciously, the very postulates of ancestral morality should silently die out of society because, in point of fact, they have never existed in the minds of a vast and ever vaster proportion of the citizens. That is the danger, the magnitude of which it is scarcely possible to exaggerate. The State is the only existing power which can deal with the citizens as a whole, and especially the only power which

can bring under discipline the least civilised sections of the people. What instrument comparable with a systematic teaching of the New Testament in the State-schools does the State possess for doing this necessary work? The New Testament is no mere manual of morality, which could be made the text-book of instruction. It is this, but its unique virtue does not depend on the fact. The New Testament carries the story of the life of Christ, and communicates the noblest principles of conduct, which the race of man possesses, in the only form in which principles can be grasped by young and simple understandings, by means of an exemplary person. If you want any proof of this, I would point you to the suggestive and consolatory facts of popular Christianity in this country. Consider the demonstrations daily provided by the Salvation Army, or the Church Army, or any other organisation which works, with whatever admixtures of error and self-advertisement, among the poorest sections of English society. There you may see if you will—I myself have often seen it—the amazing moral power of the New Testament. If it be said, as it may truly be said, that in these cases the New Testament

reaches men with the accompanying recommendations of Christian devotion and Christian holiness, I reply that this must always be the case if the historical message is to become the "power of God unto salvation"; but that the task of the Christian evangelist is everywhere facilitated, and in some sense made possible by the fact that the authority of the New Testament, and the main lines of the life of Christ, are generally established and familiar in the minds of even our poorest people, thanks to the schools in which they have been trained. To banish the New Testament from the State-schools would be to strike out of the hand of the Christian evangelist his most effective instrument.

The State, then, quite apart from any concern with the churches, and leaving them out of reckoning, in the interest of civilisation itself, in order to make sure that the tradition of fundamental morality, by which society coheres, does not grow weak and even perish among the citizens, cannot dispense with the New Testament in the State-schools. Has the Christian Church any reason for objecting to such use of the New Testament? That is the question to which I must now address myself.

There seem to be two main objections which weigh so heavily in the mind of many religious persons as to make them prefer what is called a secular system of education in the State-schools to a system which includes a regular teaching of the New Testament.

In the first place, there is an objection to the State as the instrument by which any form of religious teaching is given. This objection is urged by two very widely opposed sections of the Christian Church. All sacerdotalists, whether Roman Catholic or Anglican, agree to repudiate the State as in any sense, save that which reduces it to the obedient handmaid of the hierarchy, a teacher of religion. The ugly and much-abused word Erastianism is applied to every proposal which aims at securing, apart from the action or control of the hierarchy, a teaching of fundamental Christianity in the State-schools. The objection has a long and interesting history; it presupposes a specific theory of the Church; and cannot be met by any arguments of expediency, however nobly conceived and apparently inspired by a just conception of patriotic duty. Wherever large numbers of the citizens seriously hold ultra-

montane doctrines as to the relations of Church and State, it is futile to argue the case of religion in the State-schools. The very existence of State-schools is the grievance, since only by the Church can satisfactory schools be carried on. I shall not attempt, therefore, to discuss this aspect of the objection before us. Ultramontanes, whether Roman or Anglican, must be satisfied, if they can be satisfied, by special facilities, apart from the general system. While then, on one side, the State is refused as a teacher of religion because such a *rôle* is held to conflict with the rights of the Church, on another side the same refusal is dictated by a specific conception of the State. It is thought to imply some outrage of the inherent franchises of the individual conscience that public authority should determine any teaching of religion. The older Independents, joining hands in this particular with the individualistic school of democratic politicians, demand a total abstinence on the part of the State from all concern with religion. Thus the objection against the State as the agent of religious instruction represents two survivals of past phases of national development. The mediæval phase, when the State

was subject to the Church, lives on in the contention of the sacerdotalist minorities, that only the Church—that is of course the hierarchy—can teach religion. The Caroline phase, when the State absorbed and exploited the Church, lives on in the protest against the State's oppression of individual consciences, which has survived its original provocation, and now remains as an entrenched prejudice against all religious action on the part of the State. There is this difference. The mediæval view, being rooted in definite beliefs as to the sacerdotal and sacramental character of the Christian society, is likely to survive, and has indeed notoriously exhibited an astonishing power of persistence and recrudescence during the last century. The independent view, having its origin rather in the legitimate resentments provoked by a politico-ecclesiastical system which no longer exists, is likely to lose strength, and in process of time to pass away. In point of fact, it is the case that there has passed a great change on the general attitude towards the State, which religious Nonconformists adopt. The old individualistic conception of the State is in all directions giving place to a larger and more

generous conception, which may be called, not altogether unjustly, socialistic. There is an evident incongruity between an earnest advocacy of State action both in restricting anti-social developments of individual liberty, and in undertaking social services of all kinds, on the one hand, and a rigid exclusion of the State from any concern with a matter which plainly touches the interests of the citizens so closely as the inclusion of moral and religious teaching in, or its exclusion from the system of national education, on the other.

I do not propose to discuss the theory of the State which underlies the Nonconformist objection to religious teaching in the State-schools, because I believe that, however for the moment it may find somewhat noisy expression, it has already been abandoned by the majority of thoughtful Nonconformists, and is destined to disappear altogether before long.

Two broad facts are in my judgment sufficient to disallow the objection, from whatever quarter urged, against the State as the teacher of religion. The first has been already stated more than once in these addresses. It is the

simple and unquestioned fact that there is no other agent which can do the work. The Churches have no adequate machinery; they are themselves perforce compelled to admit that they cannot take over from the State the task of teaching elementary faith and morals to the children of this country. In the matter of education, as in many other matters, the resources of the Christian Church as an organised institution have been outgrown by the modern nation, and the State must undertake what, at an earlier time, was done and well done by the Church. How great the discrepancy between the machinery of the Church and the requirements of the nation has become may be seen by two contrasts. In the reign of Henry VIII. there were 8467 parishes in England and Wales; there are now, on the most liberal estimate, no more than 15,000. In Henry VIII.'s reign the population of England and Wales is probably estimated to have been less than 3,000,000. At the present time it is nearly 33,000,000. The clergy now are said to number about 22,000; they were probably more numerous when the Reformation began, for the parochial system was then only part of the ecclesiastical

machine. In every district of England the monastic foundations exercised an influence hardly inferior to that of the parish clergy. That is one contrast. Here is another. The income of the national Church from endowments was on the eve of the Reformation probably not less, possibly far more than one-fifth of the national income. It is at this moment certainly less than one four-hundredth part. Twopence in the income-tax produces more than the entire endowments of the national Church. These are rough enough tests, but they will serve to point my argument. The Church, even when aided by the Nonconformists, cannot do the work of teaching religion in the schools. Let me quote the carefully expressed but decisive conclusions of the Commissioners of 1888 :—

> "The vast importance of religious instruction and training for children being generally admitted . . . we think it right to point out . . . what must be the results to certain classes of those who frequent our elementary schools of a purely secular system of education. . . .
>
> "We give two typical cases of large classes

of our population: the first case (and no unfrequent one) is where both parents, being poor, are engrossed from morning to night by daily work, and having had themselves but little instruction, and not possessing a very strong sense of religion, are neither physically nor morally able to give their children religious teaching out of school hours or on Sunday; they are anxious, as our evidence tells us is often found to be the case with such parents, that their children should be religiously educated; the only day school near them is by the hypothesis secular; there is no Sunday school, or it belongs to a church they dislike, or it only supplies room for a small portion of the children of the district, so their children must grow up, against the parents' wishes, with no religious instruction. Worse still is the plight of the second case we will describe: that of the children of the dissolute, criminal, drunken, or grossly negligent parent; they have still less chance of hearing of religion at home. Even if there be room in the Sunday school, and their parents allow them to attend it, their very condition will make their admission

difficult. Our education law has closed to a great extent the Ragged Schools, which would have sought them out and given them the most suitable religious teaching. Their only opportunity therefore, except in special cases, of having a knowledge of God and of Christianity, would be in the day school, where the State obliges them to spend all their school life; but from this a secular system, if adopted, . . . shuts out the Bible, prayer, hymns, and all religious training. Therefore these children also must in all probability grow up knowing nothing of religion. These two typical cases represent vast numbers, especially in our large cities, and all our evidence has gone to show that the present staff of ministers of all churches and denominations, as well as the many various existing religious associations and societies, are much too few in number, in proportion to the population, to supply the religious training for these children. For the mass of the children above described, we must put on record our opinion that if they do not receive religious instruction and training from the teachers in the public

elementary schools they will receive none, and that this is a matter of the gravest concern to the State." [1]

The other fact is manifest to any man who will consent to think. Under the circumstances of our nation the State cannot stand aside in a self-ordained "neutrality," when the issue "to be or not to be" of religion in the State-schools is raised. To exclude the Bible from the education, which the majority of the citizens *must* receive, is to place the brand of national contempt on the Bible. To omit the teaching of the New Testament from whatsoever moral training is provided in the State-schools, is to exert the vast forces of the nation itself in an anti-Christian direction. The notion of a "neutral State" in this matter of religion in the schools has been sufficiently exposed in Australia, where the secular experiments of the colonial legislatures have worked out in almost grotesque insults to Christian sentiment. The objection to the State as the agent by which religion is taught in the State-schools of a Christian nation is perhaps more loudly expressed than widely

[1] Vide *Report*, pp. 125, 126.

felt, but the other objection is more reasonable in itself, and appeals to a far more respectable and considerable section of English folk. It is not to be dismissed in a few sentences, and therefore I shall reserve it for a separate address.

IV

OF UNDOGMATIC CHRISTIANITY

It is universally agreed that the religious teaching which, under any educational settlement likely to command general acceptance, the State shall provide in the elementary schools will be "undogmatic." It would appear eminently desirable that we should clearly understand what we mean by that important word. I observe that many distinguished and able Anglicans exert themselves to demonstrate the inherent absurdity of the notion that any religious instruction can be destitute of dogma. Religion, we are told, implies belief in a personal God, and there at once are two indispensable dogmas—the existence and the personality of God. The argument is easy and effective, and (what is of no slight importance) capable of rhetorical expression, which commends it particularly to the overwhelming logicians of the

popular pulpit. But the argument is really irrelevant and mischievous, because in point of fact most people do not use words with pedantic accuracy, but are content to assume their conventional senses. This word "undogmatic" must no more be rigidly pressed, as if it necessarily carried the meaning which it ought from the grammarian's standpoint to carry, than many another word which passes on the lips of men in common conversation. Take, for example, the similar word "informal." Properly, no doubt, the word ought to mean a total absence of all form, but of course in actual usage it means nothing of the kind. An "informal" discussion, or an "unceremonious" interview only mean that certain forms and ceremonies were omitted, that only such forms as were inseparable from the discussion and contact of reasonable and civilised beings were adopted. It would be very futile to expend time and energy in demonstrating the inherent absurdity of such expressions. They are convenient and intelligible, and that is sufficient. So with this much-abused and much-ridiculed word "undogmatic," we shall be content if the sense commonly given to it be sound, and not

distress ourselves unduly if that sense involve a certain linguistic impropriety. We may certainly put aside the grotesque notion that multitudes of serious, devout, and well-educated men are pressing for something which is so transparently absurd as that "undogmatic religion," which is belaboured in the pulpits and party newspapers. In this address I desire, first, to show what is meant by "undogmatic" Christianity, and then to offer some reasons for thinking that this is precisely suited to the needs of elementary schools.

I suppose we shall all be agreed that by "dogma" is meant *an officially formulated definition of some religious truth.* Dogmatic Christianity is Christianity as it is expressed in officially formulated definitions of religious truth. If the essence of Christianity be placed in its dogmatic aspect, then the best Christian is he who has the most complete, accurate, and precise knowledge of creeds and confessions. Probably there are no serious Christians who would not repudiate such a conception of genuine discipleship. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth," wrote St. Paul, and the long experience of the Christian Church bears him

out. Orthodoxy, as it is called, the Christianity which insists most on an accurate knowledge of credenda, has a sinister and constant association with lovelessness. Undogmatic Christianity represents the conviction that the essence of Christ's religion lies less in the intellectual than in the moral sphere. It does not deny the truth implicit in the conception of orthodoxy, but it exalts the fact of moral obedience to a superior place, and makes the former depend on the latter, not the latter on the former. Religious men have ever been conscious of the danger of unduly emphasising the dogmatic aspect of Christianity. It would be easy to collect a great number of illustrations from every age, and from every church, but I will limit myself to a few examples taken from our own reformed Church. John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist, advocates "undogmatic Christianity" in these words:—

> "He that is most practical in Divine things, hath the purest and sincerest knowledge of them, and not he that is most dogmatical. . . . Divine truth is better understood, as it unfolds itself in the purity

of men's hearts and lives, than in all those subtle niceties into which curious wits may lay it forth. And therefore our Saviour, Who is the great Master of it, would not, while He was here on earth, draw it up into any system or body, nor would His disciples after Him; He would not lay it out to us in any canons or articles of belief, not being indeed so careful to stock and enrich the world with opinions and notions, as with true piety, and a Godlike pattern of purity, as the best way to thrive in all spiritual understanding. His main scope was to promote an holy life, as the best and most compendious way to a right belief. He hangs all true acquaintance with Divinity upon the doing God's will, 'If any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.'" [1]

This emphasis on the moral aspect of Christianity was as little pleasing to the general body of English Churchmen in the seventeenth century as the emphasis on undogmatic Christianity is now, nevertheless it was thoroughly Evangelical. If the spirit of the Cambridge Platonists has

[1] Vide *The Cambridge Platonists*, pp. 80, 86. Oxford, 1901.

survived in any modern divine, it would be Frederic Denison Maurice who might seem best entitled to their succession. Let me read to you a few sentences from a striking letter which he wrote to the Bishop of Argyll in the year 1867:—

> "I believe the Catholic Faith . . . has been underlying Christendom, expressing itself in the Universal Baptism, in the Holy Communion, in prayers that carried men above all their notions and dogmas. I believe that this faith has been struggling against a huge mass of sacerdotal and popular opinions in every age, and that there is in our age a wonderful gathering of Romanist and Protestant dogmatists, of Spiritualists and Comtists, of Conservatives and of Democrats to overthrow it. . . . At the same time, out of Romanism and Protestantism, out of every form of philosophy, out of every political school, there are coming forth such witnesses of it as a real foundation upon which honest men can stand, though the earth should be removed and the mountains carried into the depth of the sea, as there

never have been in any previous age, and as gather the testimonies of all previous ages into themselves. *The substitution of Dogma for God, which is the characteristic tendency of Pusey and his school* . . . is surely leading to a fearful Atheism, or to . . . a Devil-worship which will force men to a belief of a God of absolute justice and love, a real Redeemer from the pit of darkness and despair." [1]

Something must be allowed for the freedom of private correspondence, and something more for the vehement feelings provoked at that time by the ecclesiastical conflicts stirred by the Tractarians, but even so these words are worth quoting for themselves, and as an interesting example of that unfavourable sense attaching to the word "dogma," which underlies the phrase "undogmatic Christianity." Maurice was certainly no flabby sentimentalist; in some directions he might be styled an uncompromising advocate of dogma; he opposed the movement for setting aside the Athanasian Creed, and expressed himself an ardent supporter of that highly dogmatic formulary. Yet he accused

[1] Vide *Life*, vol. ii. p. 571.

the followers of Dr. Pusey of "substituting dogma for God," meaning clearly that the excessive emphasis laid on orthodox and authorised theological definitions by the Oxford School of Divines tended to depress spiritual religion.

Dr. Hort shall be my next example. His son, in the admirable Biography published ten years ago, tells us that his father, in common with all the leading Anglicans of the time, was vehemently opposed to any separation between religious and "secular" education, and that he based his opposition on the fact that such a separation was not only unnatural in itself, but would tend to impart "a needlessly *dogmatic character* to the 'religion.'"[1] He exerted himself to secure in the Board Schools the substitution of the Apostles' Creed for the Catechism, as an alternative to some suggestions of what we are now accustomed to call "facilities." There is a letter written to Dr. Lightfoot in 1870, when the great Education Act of Mr. Forster was in shaping, which has so manifest relevancy to the present situation that I shall take leave to quote it:

[1] Vide *Life*, vol. i. p. 381.

"We are in great terror at the kind of compromise which Gladstone hinted the other day, thinking that it will destroy most of the virtue, and encourage any latent vice, of 'denominational' education. It must draw a sharp line between 'secular' and 'religious' instruction, and keep constantly before the eyes of the children the ugly fact of divisions, while intensifying those divisions themselves. In short, it is truly sectarian without securing the integrity of thorough Church teaching. It seems quite worth while to try to set up the Apostles' Creed as a common standard; it is printed by the Congregationalists in their Year-Book. Such an union may lead to a better understanding between Churchmen and Dissenters in *all* matters. . . . No doubt the name of the Catechism on one side, and the jealousy of the Church on the other, may annihilate all common ground. But it seems worth while trying whether the more reasonable Churchmen and Dissenters cannot save some real Christian teaching." [1]

[1] Vide *Life*, vol. ii. p. 121.

Writing a few weeks later to Maurice, Dr. Hort returns to the subject :—

> "The loss of the Catechism would be great, but I think the gain would be worth the price. If only we can keep the Creed as an acknowledged bond of union, that alone would surely repay the loss. Too often now the Creed is lost in the Catechism." [1]

This advocacy of the Apostles' Creed was really an advocacy of "undogmatic Christianity." Dr. Hort was too sound a theologian, and too good a Christian, not to perceive that the emphasis which, in the ardour of the educational controversy, the most part of the clergy were placing on dogmatic teaching in the schools, was threatening the proportions of the faith and the quality of religion. In a letter written about this time to Dr. Westcott, he expresses these apprehensions with characteristic vivacity :

> "Is it not amazing to see people who suppose themselves to be good Churchmen abandoning the Catholic position and setting up a 'Trinitarian' Alliance? There is some

[1] Vide *Life*, vol. ii. p. 124.

real faith in the Incarnation left in various quarters, but in England the Trinity seems to have become the merest dogma. It has been killed, one fears, by that hapless *Quicunque vult*, and its substitution of geometry for life." [1].

Dr. Hort eagerly presses for the Apostles' Creed, while he thus almost scornfully sets aside the Athanasian. The one placed the great facts of Christianity before the student with the least possible admixture of theological definition: the latter so completely subordinated the facts to the theological definition that they seemed to disappear in a wilderness of words. The Apostles' Creed was the formula of "undogmatic Christianity"; the Athanasian Creed of that precise and passionate dogmatism which, to Dr. Hort as to Maurice, seemed to threaten the very existence of religion. "The Dogmatist," said Bishop Westcott to his clergy in 1899, "accepts formulæ as equivalent to complete truths." "Undogmatic Christianity" means Christianity expressed by men who are not in this sense "dogmatists," men who have greater regard for

[1] Vide *Life*, vol. ii. p. 140.

the truths of religion than for the formulæ, which, with whatever degree of official authority, have been created for their utterance. I will add but one more illustration of the sense which attaches, in the thought of those who adopt it in good faith, to such a phrase as "undogmatic Christianity." One of the most remarkable and widely influential Churchmen of the nineteenth century was Phillips Brooks, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Massachusetts, and among his contemporaries he stood pre-eminently as the champion of an "undogmatic" religion. You will find in his writings the most trenchant denunciations of "orthodoxy," and side by side with them the most earnest protests against that laxity of belief which so commonly goes along with the profession of tolerance. "Orthodoxy is in the Church," he writes, "very much what prejudice is in the single mind. It is the premature conceit of certainty. It is the treatment of the imperfect as if it were the perfect. . . . Orthodoxy begins by setting a false standard of life. It makes men aspire after soundness in the faith rather than after richness in the truth. It exalts possessions over character, makes more of truths than of truthfulness,

talks about truths as if they were things which were quite separated from the truth-holder, things which he might take in his hand and pass to his neighbour without their passing into and through his nature. It makes possible an easy transmission of truth, but only by the deadening of truth, as a butcher freezes meat in order to carry it across the sea. . . . It is responsible for a large part of the defiant liberalism which not merely disbelieves the orthodox dogma, but disbelieves it with a sense of attempted wrong and of triumphant escape. It is orthodoxy, and not truth, which has done the persecuting."[1] This is decisive to the point of fierceness; yet we are warned by his biographer to be on our guard against supposing that the writer shared the contempt for theology, which such an onslaught on "orthodoxy" might suggest. "He had attained his freedom through dogma, not by its rejection, and dogma continued to minister to his freedom." What he said of Maurice might stand for a very just account of himself:

> "The days in which we live are a good deal given to contempt for theology. In

[1] Vide *Life*, vol. ii. p. 490.

this great teacher of our day there was a noble rebuke and protest against that feeble and enfeebling scorn. He was altogether a theologian. For him all knowledge which deserved the name of knowledge was theology. Our weak way of talking about dogma as an excrescence and encumbrance found no tolerance with him. He was no dogmatist, but he got rid of dead dogmas, not by burying them or burning them, but by filling them with life." [1]

"In one sense," observes his biographer, "he was not a dogmatic preacher, defending in the pulpit ecclesiastical doctrines. Yet, on the other hand, the hidden motive and inspiration of many, if not most, of his sermons was some recondite aspect of dogma, into whose meaning he had penetrated, and in so doing, caught fresh confirmation of the highest possibilities in humanity." "Undogmatic," then, is not to be understood as non-dogmatic, or as anti-dogmatic, but as indicating an emphasis placed not on a definition but on the truth which it defines. It describes, therefore, a method of teaching

[1] Vide *Life*, vol. ii. p. 493.

which permits the omission of the defining dogma, if the communication of the truth is by that omission the better secured. That this is precisely the case when the teaching must be given to young children is my next proposition.

The psychologists are perhaps better worth our listening to than the theologians when this part of our subject is being discussed. Are children between the ages of five and fourteen really best taught by means of dogmas, that is, theological definitions? I noted a suggestive passage from a small book by a great man, which is very well known to teachers, Professor William James's *Talks to Teachers*; let me read it to you as directly bearing on the point before us:

> "It is not till adolescence is reached that the mind grows able to take in the more abstract aspects of experience, the hidden similarities and distinctions between things, and especially their causal sequences. Rational knowledge of such things as mathematics, mechanics, chemistry, and biology, is now possible; and the acquisition of conceptions of this order form the next

phase of education. Later still, not till adolescence is well advanced, does the mind awaken to a systematic interest in abstract human relations—moral relations properly so called—to sociological ideas and to metaphysical abstractions." [1]

The writer does not name theology, but I think you will allow that he might have done so without impropriety. If "abstract human relations" are beyond the faculties of children, what must be said of abstract Divine relations, such as those which are implied in the doctrine of the Trinity? Another eminent American psychologist, Professor Stanley Hall, writes with decision on the futility of imposing elaborate dogmatic teaching on the young:

"Children's religious conceptions should at least not be systematised or stereotyped, or growth will be checked. The Bible for childhood should be pure literature, with no trace of dogma. It is simply bad Bible pedagogy that makes children precocious and strident sceptics about the grand stories and miracles of Scripture, while tales from

[1] Page 148.

Homer, Shakespeare, Greek tragedy, and Dante maintain their sway over the heart, unchallenged by the callow intellect. The Bible moves, edifies, and shapes the soul, and we are content to leave it to expert scholars to inquire how much or how little historical validity it has; and, whatever their verdict, it will have little effect on our feelings or practical reaction to Scripture. The havoc that dogma has wrought in the religious nature and nurture of the young by regarding the Bible as a text-book of theology rather than a guide to life, as itself literally inspired rather than the most inspiring of books, is none the less disastrous because well meant. The very idea of orthodoxy of belief in this field or of formulated creed is ominous for youth. Theology at its best is an attempt to describe religious experiences, especially feelings and intuitions. The need of it arises when the latter are past and lapse into the domain of memory. When they are most vividly present they need no explanation, for they are not symbols of something else, but essential and intrinsic reality them-

selves. True religion culminates in youth, and doctrine is its substitute and memorial in maturity and old age." [1]

In a small volume recently published under the title *The Child and Religion*, there is an interesting essay on "The Child's Capacity for Religion," from the pen of Professor Ladd of Yale University. I may usefully read a few sentences :—

> "In the religious, as in all other forms of the practical life of the child, the influence of example is most potent, is ever apt to be supreme. The child is not, indeed, capable of comprehending the mystical relations in which the dogmas of Christianity teach that Jesus stands to God ; neither can he entertain the conceptions in debate between those who hold to the double, and those who affirm the single nature of the 'Son of Man.' But the child is capable of appreciating, in a childlike but in a substantially true and exceedingly effective way, the beauty and the moral value of the kind of life which Jesus led. By an act of will it is capable of choosing to

[1] Vide *Adolescence*, vol. ii. p. 318 f.

follow Jesus, and to be a son of God after the pattern of Him who is, in a special and unique way, God's Son. To express this capacity in terms that have their origin in the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles, the child is capable of conversion, resignation, and edification in the religious life, after the rule and in the spirit of Christ." [1]

Now if this view of childhood be a sound view, then it would appear that the advocates of what is commonly called "definite Church teaching" for children are not really serving by their advocacy the cause which they have at heart. Undogmatic teaching is not so much an indispensable element of any system which can be established in the State-schools, as the only reasonable form in which children can be grounded in faith and morals. Instead of denouncing and ridiculing "undogmatic teaching," it would be a more rational and serviceable proceeding on the part of those, who are sincerely desiring to secure in the State-schools a sound basis of education, to address themselves to the really serious question, What are the conditions

[1] Page 144.

of such undogmatic teaching as shall be truly effective? For it is apparent that, if religious teaching is to be "*undogmatic*," and the child is to learn what he learns *indirectly*, through the natural effect of the Scriptural stories and ideals on the development of his conscience and imagination, and the impression made upon him by the examples he observes, not merely in the sacred literature, but in the teachers at whose hands he receives his lessons, and more than all else by the "atmosphere" of the school itself, where he must pass so great a portion of his time, and in many cases must receive all the good influences which shall mould his character, and give a right direction to his aspirations—if these are to be the salient facts of his moral and religious education, then we must turn our principal attention, not to the precise form which the Syllabus of Religious Teaching may take, but to the teachers who will determine the practical value of that Syllabus, because they and they alone can create the conditions which shall give it value, examples of right living, and a pure tradition in the school itself. On this point, I think, reflective men on both sides of the present controversy are more nearly agreed than

they acknowledge. The opponent of "facilities," and the advocate of denominational "atmosphere" are not so far removed from one another as might at first view be supposed. Both at least are maintaining the indispensableness of guarding the *moral unity* of the school by prohibiting the entrance of alien and possibly hostile elements from outside. Both perceive that everything really depends on the teachers, and that all the State has it in its power to do is to make such dispositions as shall enable the Christianity of the teachers to express itself effectively in the process of education, not their prejudices and preferences, of which the less the better for their own sakes and the children's, but the graces of personal character which they have received in the school of the New Testament.

V

OF THE TEACHERS IN THE STATE-SCHOOLS

If moral and religious instruction is to form an integral element of the education provided in the State-schools, that instruction will necessarily be entrusted to the regular teachers commissioned, employed, and paid by the State. This necessity arises from three facts. In the first place, there are no other teachers who could have access to the large mass of poor and neglected children which exists outside the membership of the churches. In the next place, there are very few amateurs who could be admitted as teachers into the State-schools without an intolerable derangement of the discipline by their didactic incompetence. In the third place, it is agreed that the morally effective teaching is the least direct, and that to isolate the instruction from the general procedure of the

school would go far to destroy its value. Taken in connection with the whole life of the school, and contributing a distinct and apparent elevation to all the teaching, the religious instruction would strengthen and consecrate the influence of the teachers, and tend to create a wholesome and kindly "tone" among the children; but separated, and standing outside the moral unity of the system, unrelated either to the personal interest of the regular teachers or to the common course of education, that religious instruction would be a perfunctory and futile thing, scarcely worth the disturbance of ordinary arrangements which its provision would necessitate. This necessity of employing the regular teachers in the work of religious instruction being conceded, it follows that it is quite impossible to avoid the difficult question as to the securities which can be obtained of their fitness for this work. Do the conditions of the State service admit of any sufficient assurance that the men and women who teach the Bible in the State-schools are themselves in such sense religious that they can teach sincerely and usefully? It is certainly the case that much anxiety is expressed in many quarters, and no small exultation in others;

the one sentiment fills the minds of sincerely religious folk, who desire most earnestly to secure religious teaching in the State-schools; the other is scarcely concealed by those, whether religious or not, who are straining every nerve to secularise the education of England. This is declared to be the Gordian knot which none can untie; on this dilemma the most ardent conviction must come to nought. Either have religion taught in the schools under conditions which offend the Christian conscience, or banish it altogether! In varying phrase that is the contention which is being pressed on the public mind from very different quarters. The sacerdotalist and the secularist can here join hands, and subdue their mutual antagonism to a common effort to divorce the State from all responsibility for religious teaching. I propose, then, to examine the situation a little closely, and to satisfy myself whether or not we are in such hard case as is asserted.

When we consider the common objection to the imposition of religious tests and denominational qualifications, we find that it includes two elements. On the one hand, such imposition is held to imply a violation of that civic equality

which is an axiom of democratic politics. No citizen ought to be disadvantaged by his religious profession; the State ought to be able to draw into its service all competent citizens without distinction of creed or denomination. On the other hand, such imposition is held to imply a desecration of religion, for it connects material advantages with the profession of specific beliefs, and thus tends to lower the standard of sincerity in religious profession, and even to put a premium on hypocrisy. This dread of wounding the conscience by an indirect, but not the less demoralising, bribe cannot be lightly dismissed, for it has justifications in the national history, which lend special significance to the probabilities of the case. Cowper's well-known lines carry a warning, which can never be altogether irrelevant when any association is established between sacred professions and secular interests. The Test Act was only the supremely scandalous example of abuses which, in varying measure, attach to every official using of religion for ends which, however important, are not properly the ends of religion.

"Hast thou by statute shoved from its design,
The Saviour's feast, His own blest Bread and Wine,

> And made the symbols of atoning grace
> An office-key, a pick-lock to a place,
> That infidels may prove their title good
> By an oath dipp'd in sacramental blood?
> A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
> Of all that grave apologists may write;
> And though a bishop toil'd to cleanse the stain,
> He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain."[1]

We certainly must not forget this history of religious tests for secular office when we discuss the particular case before us. There are, however, circumstances which draw a distinction between that case and the sacramental test, and go far to remove it from the category of tests altogether. It cannot be seriously argued that civic equality is violated by insisting upon men's competence for whatever employment they apply for; and the teaching of religion and morality does not differ altogether from the teaching of less important subjects. It does differ in a most important particular, which I shall immediately state, but apart from this there is much that is the same. In so far as the impression made on the child is mainly determined by the personal influence and example of the teacher, and these are connected

[1] "*Expostulation.*"

with his character, which itself is not unconnected with his convictions, competence for teaching religion and morality cannot be certified by the conventional evidences; but in so far as it involves the handling of historical facts, and the instruction of the young in the sacred literature, it is obvious that securities of knowledge can be given, and ought to be taken. I do not suppose it will be argued that any democratic principle would be outraged, or any injury inflicted on religion, by requiring teachers of religion and morals to show evidence by certificate or testimonial that they had acquired the requisite knowledge. Character must be made a subject of inquiry quite apart from the religious instruction, for no reasonable man would defend appointing teachers without inquiry as to their moral fitness for so responsible a work. A certificate of religious knowledge and credentials of character go a very long way towards providing all the evidence of competence for the work of religious instruction which it is possible to secure. The first is a formal guarantee of intellectual efficiency; the latter is an informal assurance of moral fitness. If to these were added a

statutory right vested in the teacher to decline, on conscientious grounds, the task of giving religious instruction, I am disposed to think that all the *legitimate* purpose of a denominational qualification would be secured. For the rest we must depend on other grounds of confidence.

The elementary school teachers come for the most part from the most religious classes in the nation, the lower middle and the upper artisan classes. The general law, which makes trades and professions hereditary, applies also to the teaching profession, and in point of fact a large proportion of the teachers are the children and even the grandchildren of teachers. There is no reason for doubting that they are representative of the classes and households from which they come. If this be assumed to be the case, then there is no great probability that there will be any considerable number of disbelieving teachers in the ranks of the teaching profession. Moreover, most of these teachers receive their training in denominational colleges, and may be fairly supposed to have received some religious impressions from the time spent, at an extremely receptive period of their lives, in

religious surroundings. I may be allowed to express my hope that the new legislation will not destroy the religious character of the training colleges. There are reasons for this, quite apart from the obvious advantage of being able to offer religious people this assurance, indirect but none the less considerable, that the teachers are competent for their task. From the standpoint of the teachers themselves it seems very important that they should receive their religious training in denominational forms. For every argument that recommends simple Biblical instruction as very suitable to the needs of young children in the State-schools fails, when not young children but adolescents in training colleges are the persons concerned. They are at the very age when personal convictions are formed, and when those convictions express themselves most imperatively in religious acts. The religion of adolescence must be denominational, and cannot without grave injury be deprived of dénominational fellowship and enthusiasm. A college, moreover, differs from a school in this respect, that not so many hours in the day but the entire life is spent within its walls or under its discipline and influence.

The students reside, as well as are trained in it. The best interests of collegiate efficiency will be served by retaining the denominational character of the training colleges. It is to be remembered that the teachers, coming, as I have already pointed out, in great measure from the artisan class, which has a very low standard of culture, and very strong class prejudices, stand in great need of the assistance of collegiate life in shaping character and forming habits. In these respects there is no adequate substitute for the discipline and worship of a denominational society. The moral quality of the training given in these colleges depends mainly on the tone of the college life, and this is almost entirely determined by the personal influence of the college staff. Experience demonstrates, I think, that the best kind of man, with the morally richest influence on others, is far more likely to be a man of strong and earnest denominational convictions than not. The pastoral spirit, if I may adopt a conventional phrase, which is intimately connected with an earnest personal piety, attaches itself naturally to a church, and is sustained by religious fellowship. The State

will be well advised if in this respect it accepts a gift from denominational Christianity, which is most valuable in itself, and most necessary to the sound working of a common system of education. Educational authorities bear emphatic testimony to the superior efficiency of denominational training colleges. There is more enthusiasm, a happier and richer moral tone, a keenness, and an *esprit de corps*, which have little corresponding to them in the chill and artificial atmosphere of an undenominational institution. These qualities, I repeat, are of special importance in view of the social type mainly represented by the students.

The circumstances of the teacher's professional work make it very desirable that he should be attached to a church by personal conviction and habit. The late Sir Joshua Fitch, in an address to University Extension students delivered at Oxford in 1899, spoke of the conditions under which the elementary teachers have to live and work :—

> "Owing to the special circumstances of my own official experience, I feel peculiar interest in the teachers—both head masters

and mistresses and their assistants—of our public elementary schools. Except within the walls of their own schoolrooms, they often live very sequestered lives. In country places they have few opportunities of intercourse with fellow teachers. Their social advantages are not great. They cannot, of course, find congenial friends and companions in the class to which their scholars belong, and from which many of them as pupil teachers themselves have been selected. And they are not always received on a footing of equality into the circles in which men of the learned professions—clergy, doctors, and lawyers—move freely and determine the tone and standard of the best social life. However we may deplore the exclusiveness which often dominates English society, we must accept it as a fact: and one result of it is that the trained and qualified elementary teacher, however well-instructed and well-mannered, occupies practically a rather uncertain and anomalous status, and finds himself both intellectually and socially in a position of isolation, which is not wholly favourable to the development of his best

qualities, or to the dignity and happiness of his life.

"He spends his days in the presence of his intellectual inferiors, of children who look upon him as a prodigy of erudition, and who know nothing of his limitations. It is a fine thing for any one in playing his part on the stage of life to perform in the presence of an audience which habitually demands his best. But the schoolmaster works for the most part before an uncritical audience, which, so far from challenging his highest powers and demanding his best, is often well content with his worst."[1]

Membership of a denomination tends to remove this isolation and to correct this self-complaisance. I have myself known teachers, after serving under School Boards, deliberately seek employment in denominational schools on the specific ground that they found a happier and more social ordering of life in the latter. To no small extent I incline to believe that the defect of the non-denominational schools in this respect arose from the hostility with which they

[1] Vide *Educational Aims and Methods*, p. 315.

were generally regarded by the national Church, or at least by the clergy and their immediate followers, and so far I should be ready to hope that the extinction of denominational schools would tend to strengthen the educational system where hitherto it has been specially weak. When all is said, however, it remains the case that the teachers are the better for being associated with their equals in the life of a church, and not left to form a narrow society of their own. From the specific standpoint of the advocate for religious teaching in the State-schools, it needs no saying that the best security for efficiency which can be obtained is the fact that the teachers are generally members of some Christian church. Happily this is at present the case, and if the churches could abandon the attitude of suspicion and dislike, which, under the guidance of leaders who care far more for the immediate interest of their party than for the permanent advantage of education, they have been led to adopt, there would be good reason for thinking that it would continue to be the case in the future. It would, however, be the merest affectation to pretend not to know that there are signs of a definite breach of sentiment

between the teaching profession and the churches, and that, unless the long-standing quarrel about religion in the State-schools can be terminated by some reasonable compromise, that breach may extend to a complete alienation of sympathy.

It is this consideration, perhaps, more than any other which renders the present course adopted by many leading Anglican authorities so deplorable. Every one who has any knowledge of the actual working of our educational system knows that at the present moment there exists absolute confidence between the teachers and the parents of the children; and I think few impartial and well-informed persons will question that that confidence is entirely deserved. It can hardly be supposed, however, that it will survive a protracted course of such action as is now being urged on the clergy from the Episcopal Bench, and from other quarters less authoritative but perhaps not less influential. The National Society has issued a form of petition from parents of children attending public elementary schools addressed to the House of Commons. This petition prays that the House will not adopt any legislation which "would

place the Bible in the hands of teachers whose belief in the Christian faith and whose qualifications and ability to teach religion may not in any way be ascertained." In view of the fact that the Bible is actually so placed in the hands of teachers at the present time, this is to invite the parents to repudiate a system which is both familiar and acceptable in half the schools of the country. A covering letter from the Bishop of London exhorts the clergy to secure the signatures of the parents without delay to this petition. Not content, however, with the action of the diocesan, the well-known president of the English Church Union, arrogating to himself episcopal functions over the whole country, sends round a form of petition on his own account, accompanying it with a very urgently expressed covering letter. This petition "earnestly prays that in any amendment of the Education Act of 1902 which may be introduced by His Majesty's Government, care may be taken to secure to our children the right to be taught the Christian religion as set out in the Church Catechism by Christian masters and mistresses, and other teachers in regard to whom we may have some real assurance that they believe what they teach." It is

hardly possible that such petitions can be carried round to parents, and their signature obtained by the earnest persuasion of ardent and prejudiced persons without some impression being made on the parents' minds. It is equally obvious that that impression will tend to weaken and even destroy the existing confidence of the parents in the character and competence of the teachers. On any showing this organisation of parental suspicion must be unfavourable to that moral authority of the teachers, upon which the discipline of the school in the best sense of the word really depends. But even for its ostensible purpose, the securing an expression of the wishes of the parents, these petitions will be quite worthless. The Bishop of Carlisle has recently pointed out, in a very temperately-worded letter to the *Spectator*, that the facts are not truly presented in these petitions, drafted by partisans, who refuse to allow any other alternative than denominational teaching or secularism. There is the middle way of simple Biblical teaching, which has been actually adopted in half the schools in the country, and, so far as it is possible to learn, has completely satisfied the parents. If "undenominationalism" be identified with a

hypocritical form of secularism, it is possible to secure by an active canvass of the parents a good many signatures to petitions in favour of denominational teaching; but if a more honest course be taken, and the parents be invited to choose between such teaching as prevailed generally under the School Board for London, and such teaching as that described in a characteristic letter from an eminent leader of the High Church party in the *Times* for last Wednesday, it may well be thought that the parents would be found less complaisant to the clericalist agents of both sexes, who canvass them in the interest of denominationalism. Be this as it may, my present purpose is to emphasise the effect of the present action of the Church leaders on the teaching profession. Nothing is more evident, and surely nothing is more creditable than the jealous regard which the teachers manifest on all points which touch the credit and honour of their profession. It is the plain interest of the nation that this jealousy should be active and vigilant. It is the best security which can be provided against the distinctive faults of the professional teacher, slackness and perfunctoriness. In respect of the religious teaching it

emphasises the point of honour, which must make it professionally despicable for any teacher to profane the religious lesson by teaching irreligion. The point of honour is only another name for the individual conscience, and, when all is said, there is no other security which the wit of man can devise for securing that no teacher puts his hand to the task of teaching religion without a conscientious persuasion that he can rightly do so. It is the extreme of folly for the Church to set against itself the honourable self-respect of the teaching profession. Inasmuch as the teachers are the indispensable agents through whom moral and religious teaching must be given to the most necessitous children, it is manifestly absurd to weaken their influence. It is the interest of the Church to sustain at its highest possible level the standard of professional duty, which the teachers themselves accept. The Commissioners of 1888 set it on record that they had had brought before them "trustworthy testimony, some of it from teachers themselves, that, as a body, they would consider it a great loss if they were debarred from giving Bible lessons to their scholars." The Commissioners were assured that "the religious instruction

given by teachers greatly increases the moral influence of the teacher." Mr. Cumin, Secretary of the Committee of Council on Education, who probably knew more of the sentiments of the teachers than any other man, "emphatically protested against the attempt to prohibit teachers from giving moral and religious instruction in their schools." He believed "that many excellent teachers would absolutely refuse to be restricted in their teaching to secular subjects." The Commissioners do not seem to have been greatly impressed by the contention, which has loomed so largely in recent discussions, that "religious instruction ought only to be given by religious people." They dismiss it in these words :—

> "But without denying that religious teaching is liable sometimes to fall into unfit hands, all such instruction is more or less liable to the same objection, and we see no ground for admitting the inference which seems to underlie this objection that elementary teachers as a class have no special fitness for the task for which, nevertheless, a very large proportion of them have been specially trained." [1]

[1] Vide *Report*, p. 123.

VI

OF THE DUTY OF THE NATIONAL CHURCH

On 16th October 1811 the *National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church* was founded, and six years later it was incorporated by Royal Charter. In this long title there are two very significant words, on which it will be requisite to make some observations. The Society was *national*, and the principles of the education which it was empowered to give were those of the *established* Church. It is solely as the National Church that the Church of England has any special position in the business of national education, and its concern therein is limited to the principles implicit in its legal establishment. If we carry back our minds to the time at which this charter was granted, we shall be impressed by two circumstances.

On the one hand, the Church itself emphasised the national aspect of its work; on the other hand, it was universally admitted that the principles of the Establishment were those of the National Protestantism. Dissenters existed of course, though by comparison with their present numbers and importance, they were a small and insignificant part of the people; the most energetic of them were the followers of Wesley, who still for the most part resented inclusion among Dissenters, and held to the sound and valuable notion that their Methodism did not imply any exile from membership in the National Church. The religious teaching given in the schools was acceptable to almost all the Dissenters, because it was not seriously questioned in any quarter that that teaching was genuinely fundamental in the Protestant sense of the word. The British and Foreign School Society, which emerged almost at the same time as the National Society, indicated the dissenting preference for the Bible only, but did not carry any suggestion that the use of the Church Catechism involved disloyalty to that Protestantism, which all parties agreed to exalt as the distinctive glory of Great Britain.

Thoughtful men were inclined to expect a general *rapprochement* of separated Christians, and exulted in the prospect of a restoration of Christian fellowship. The terrible excesses of the French Revolution had sobered and softened men's minds, and forced them to realise something of the gravity of dissensions which discredited and weakened the Christian religion, and thus endangered the foundations of personal morality and public safety. In 1820 the famous Baptist preacher, Robert Hall, preached at Bristol on behalf of the national schools. His sermon, entitled "The Signs of the Times," is well worthy the reading of any one, who desires to understand the temper of the generation, which witnessed the birth of a system of elementary education in this country. He dwells with just emphasis on the new sense of the importance of education, which the occasion of his preaching illustrated.

> "In short, we appear at length to have become sensible that everything merits our earnest attention and encouragement which tends to promote the intellectual, moral, and civil improvement of that vast portion

of the population, in which the majority of numbers and physical strength resides, and which virtually includes the destiny of the nation; that broad basis of the pyramid of society, which, while it continues sound, affords stability to the whole, but by a rent in which the entire fabric must be endangered. Nothing in nature can be conceived more frightful, nothing more fatal to the existence of an empire, than an unprincipled, profligate, irreligious, turbulent populace, quiet perhaps at the present moment, but ready on the first occasion to break out into fury and violence."

He speaks of "the improved state of preaching, and the more abundant supply of the public means of grace," and "in justice to the established clergy of the realm" remarks on "the great advance in piety and diligence which they have exhibited during the last half-century." He describes as a "remarkable feature of our times" "the advancement of the Bible as the great and only standard of Christian faith and practice," and refers to the public testimony of a learned Roman Catholic, Leander

van Ess, to the value of the work of the Bible Society. Then he passes to a point which must arrest our special attention :—

> "As a fifth 'sign of the times,' may be mentioned that increasing harmony which prevails among the genuine disciples of Jesus Christ. At last the central principle of union begins to be extensively felt and acknowledged: amidst all the diversities of external discipline or subordinate opinion, the seed of God, the principle of spiritual and immortal life implanted in the soul, is recognised by the sincere followers of the Lamb as the transcendent point of mutual attraction in the midst of minor differences. . . . The essential spirit of religion begins to assert its ascendancy over all beside. The most enlightened, the *selectest* Christians in every denomination, are ready to cultivate an intercourse with kindred spirits, with all who hold the same essential principles, in any other. Formerly such an intercourse was rarely indulged, and accompanied with reserves and apprehensions: good men looked more at their distinctions than their

resemblances, at points of repulsion than those of attraction. Now the case is altered; and it may be truly said that, in this respect, 'the former things are passed away.' Now the saying of our common Master has received a fulfilment almost unknown before: 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, even by the love ye bear to each other.'"

He proceeds to discuss the causes of the blessed change, and the results which might flow from it.

"The reasons why Christians have been so tardy in arriving at a disposition so much to be desired, is principally to be found in those exaggerated notions of the importance of church government under some particular form, which so long swayed the minds of excellent men; the difference of outward garb concealed the unity of the spirit which inwardly animated their hearts alike. In the *seminal* principles of their religion, in their equal dependence on an incarnate Redeemer and a sanctifying Spirit, they have now discovered a centre of attraction,

—a common chord to which all their hearts vibrate in unison: and thus, without the smallest sacrifice of their respective sentiments or practices, they can indulge the most entire affection, and exert the most zealous co-operation. Can it be supposed that such an improvement will not silence the old sarcasm of infidels, derived from the prevailing dissensions of those who professed themselves the disciples of one Master? Can it be questioned whether the Christian army, thus closely embodied, will prosecute with redoubled vigour their warfare against the powers of darkness?"

Coming to the immediate purpose of his preaching, Robert Hall speaks thus:—

"With respect to the institution for which I have the honour to be an humble advocate on this occasion, if there be any force in the preceding remarks, few words are necessary to recommend it to your patronage. As you would live in a land of Bibles and readers of the Bible,—in a nation dignified as a seminary of religious instruction; as you would desire, when called to

quit the present stage of being, to leave your children in a nation of Christians ; it becomes you, more especially in a season of public alarm, to support an institution which justly assumes the name of *national*." [1]

In one of the last sermons he ever preached, the eloquent Baptist declared the essential agreement of the Dissenters with the Established Church. In 1831 the most conspicuous representative of Nonconformity in England could speak thus :—

" We do not differ from our brethren in the Establishment in essentials: we are not of two distinct religions: while we have conscientious objections to some things enjoined in their public service, we profess the same doctrines which they profess ; we worship the same God ; we look for salvation through the blood of the same Mediator ; we implore the agency of the same blessed Spirit, by whom we all have access to the Father ; we have the same rule of life ; and maintain, equally with them, the necessity of that ' holiness, without which none shall see the Lord.' " [2]

[1] Vide *Works*, vol. vi. p. 247 f., 3rd edition, 1833.
[2] Vide *ibid.* vol. v. p. 317.

Robert Hall did not stand alone in his belief that the tendencies of the time were towards the greater harmony of Christians. That very remarkable man, Alexander Knox, writing to Mrs. Hannah More in 1806, avowed his belief that there were forces actually operative, which would bring about the reunion of Dissenters with the national establishment.

> "I certainly think I perceive a very substantial change slowly taking place amid the great body of Dissenters, which, if it proceeds, as my hopes presage, will, at length, bring them round to a truer Church-of-England spirit than ever their conformist ancestors were possessed of; and thus reattach them, on plenary principles of truth, to that worship, from which sincere but partial principle had induced them to withdraw. I have strong grounds for believing, that, for some years past, Calvinism has been losing ground amongst the English Dissenters generally. You might infer this, from the single fact of Hall having written as he has done, without losing any portion of the regard of his brethren. This change then (which

has been distinctly stated to me by a dissenting minister of the best discernment and most extended observation), I trust is taking place, not from laxity as formerly, when the result was Arianism or Socinianism, but from enlargedness of mind, without loss of pious principle. If so, the result will be a proportionate approach to, and at length the arriving at, true philosophy and true Catholicism (in other words, a sound and thorough knowledge of the Scripture, and a discriminative acquaintance with the various circumstances, practices, and doctrines of the Christian Church); and, when these are attained, a distaste for the unsettled, fermentitious, half-animal methods which they had till then pursued; and a relish for more fixed, more sober, more truly spiritual habits and employments, will grow up in their mind."[1]

Knox and Hall both died in 1831; and two years later, on 9th July 1833, Keble preached his assize sermon at St. Mary's on national apostasy, which Newman considered the start of the

[1] Vide *Remains*, vol. iii. p. 177.

Oxford Movement. Later in the same year the Tracts began. The men who inaugurated the new religious movement regarded the tendencies of the time, which had filled with so much expectation their Protestant contemporaries, as altogether irreligious and immoral. Liberalism was an evil word on their lips. Their devotion took a sombre and pessimistic colour; they were as the lonely watchers in a night of general desertion; it was the last hour, and the power of darkness. The haunting fascination of the Tractarian writings arises in no small measure from their profound melancholy. There is the heroism of self-chosen failure resting on the pages of poet and preacher, like a pale autumn sun setting on vacant fields when the winter draws on. These writers, drawing their notions from the cloister and the study rather than from the general life of their time, insisted with passionate emphasis on the very points which separated Christians, and forced on the public attention everything that could alienate confidence from the Establishment. Indeed the Establishment, which was an object of respect to serious Nonconformists like Robert Hall, seemed to the Tractarians something dubious,

not to be dwelt upon, the natural enemy of "Catholic" rights. A sufficient example is the 4th Tract, entitled "Adherence to the Apostolical Succession the Safest Course."

> "For many years we have been much in the habit of resting our claim on the general duties of submission to authority, of decency and order, of respecting precedents long established; instead of appealing to that warrant, which marks us, *exclusively*, for God's Ambassadors. . . . Why then should any man here in Britain fear or hesitate boldly to assert the authority of the bishops and pastors of the Church, on grounds strictly evangelical and spiritual; as bringing men nearest to Christ our Saviour, and conforming them most exactly to His mind, indicated both by His own conduct, and by the words of His Spirit in the Apostolic writings? Why should we talk so much of an *establishment*, and so little of an Apostolical Succession? Why should we not seriously endeavour to impress our people with this plain truth,—that by separating themselves from our communion, they separate themselves not

> only from a decent, orderly, useful society, but from the only Church in this Realm which has a right to be quite sure that she has the Lord's body to give to His people."

It is no part of my present purpose to criticise these views, but it is directly relevant to my argument that I should point out the bearing of such a revolution of Anglican sentiments as the Tracts implied. The "principles of the Established Church" meant one thing when the National Society was founded and chartered, and quite another thing wherever the Tractarian opinions were accepted as a true version of Anglican beliefs. It is mere matter of fact that the Tractarian opinions have secured a very general acceptance among the English clergy, that for more than a generation they have predominated in the ranks of the hierarchy, that at this moment they prevail among the occupants of the Episcopal Bench. *Pari passu* with this victory of Tractarianism within the ranks of the hierarchy, there has advanced a process of alienation from the Protestant sentiment of the country, with the result that to-day the breach between the official Church of England and the

Dissenters has widened into an apparently unbridgeable abyss. Robert Hall has been succeeded in his own denomination by Dr. Clifford. The effect of the alienation between the Protestant sentiment of the nation and the National Church has been nowhere more apparent, and nowhere more mischievous than in the sphere of education. There it has operated as an absolute barrier to that co-operation of all English Christians, which is the evident condition of the permanence of a Christian system of elementary education. When in 1843 the Government of Sir Robert Peel projected a scheme for the better education of neglected factory children, which should embrace a religious instruction common to all English Christians, its efforts failed before the jealousies of the rival Christian Churches. "It is quite clear," wrote Sir James Graham to the Prime Minister, "that the Pusey tendencies of the Established Church have operated powerfully on the Wesleyans, and are converting them rapidly into enemies." Lord Ashley, afterwards Lord Shaftesbury, was determined by the opposition of the Nonconformists "to support in future denominational as more feasible than united education"; but he has left on record

the resentment he felt at the attitude of the Anglican authorities :—

> "We must ascribe much—very much—of this resistance to the fears of the people caused and stimulated by the perilous pranks of Dr. Pusey and his disciples. A vast body of Churchmen actuated by these alarms rejoiced in the opposition." [1]

When a subscription for the promotion of education in the manufacturing districts was set on foot, and Sir Robert Peel had headed the list of subscribers with a munificent donation of £5000, Lord Ashley wrote to complain of the unhelpful attitude of the National Society :—

> "The appeal will not be successful. We might have raised a large sum, but the National Society will make but slight concessions of any kind. It is governed by men who are wholly unequal to the exigencies of the times, ignorant of the public mind, and satisfied with themselves. Fear has some effect on them, but wisdom none." [2]

[1] Vide *Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Parker, vol. ii. p. 560.
[2] Vide *ibid.* vol. ii. p. 563.

I repeat that it is not within my purpose to criticise or pass judgment upon the Tractarian Movement; I am only concerned with pointing out the effect on the development of the educational problem, which that movement has had, and the influence which that effect ought to have on our present conduct. If it be the case that the National Society was started on a view of the "principles of the Establishment," which, by the spread of Tractarian opinions among the clergy, has been very generally abandoned, then it becomes a serious question, how far the Church of England is morally entitled to retain its original position in the educational concerns of the English nation. If between 1817, when the charter of the National Society was granted, and 1870, when the Education Act was passed, the Church of England was still very generally accepted as the organ of a Protestant nation, and the contributions which it received were given on the supposition that the religious teaching of the elementary schools was according to "the principles of the Established Church" of a Protestant nation, then objection may justly be taken to the claim advanced by the leaders of the Church of England to-day to put forward those con-

tributions, and the schools which by their means were erected and maintained, as evidences of the devotion of the English people to a conception of Anglicanism which, whatever may be said in its favour, is sharply and apparently opposed to the general Protestant sentiment of the nation. Since 1870 the obligation to contribute to the cost of elementary education has been part of the legal requirement of citizenship, and nothing can be inferred from the maintenance of Anglican schools beyond the plain fact that a legal claim has been satisfied. The schools erected before the Education Act were mostly erected upon the broad understanding that "the principles of the Established Church" were those of all Protestants; the schools erected since the Education Act were erected under legal compulsion, and were, in point of fact, a cheap alternative for rate-built and rate-supported schools. In neither case is there any basis for an attitude of obstruction on the part of the Church of England at the present time with respect to a settlement of the educational question on genuinely national lines.

If the Tractarian opinions had commended themselves to any considerable proportion of the

English people, if even it could be said that they were accepted generally by that part of the English people which constitutes the Anglican laity, there would be reason in the plea that "the principles of the Established Church" must be understood at any given time in the sense in which they are actually being understood; but it does not appear doubtful that the English people, and the Anglican laity, remain still Protestant. The views of Robert Hall as to the essential agreement of English Christians are those of the multitude of lay folks; the views of Tract Number IV. are those of a part, though at present the prevailing part, of the clergy. No fact is more important in a serviceable discussion of the educational question than this deep divergence between the laity and those who, for the time being, are their religious representatives. I am mostly concerned with its influence on the present action of English Churchmen. Take what view you will of the Tractarian opinions, you cannot seriously suppose that a Protestant nation can accept them as truly expressing "the principles of the Established Church." It might indeed have been argued with substantial truth that the conduct of the schools had lain outside

the influence of the movement, which has driven a wedge between the Protestant sentiment of the nation and the Anglican hierarchy, were it not for the circumstance that the protagonists of denominational schools happen to be mainly also the protagonists of Tractarianism. It is indeed rapidly coming to be the case within the National Church that Denominationalism and Tractarianism are different aspects of the same religious party. In both aspects the national character of the Church of England is compromised, and even repudiated. Yet it is on the basis of that national character alone that the imposing system of "national schools" was erected; and that character presupposes the general agreement of a Protestant nation in "the principles of the Established Church." It will follow from all this that I do not think the Church of England can rightly, even if it can legally, insist on its "ownership" of the schools, and stand out for the perpetuation of the privileged position, which, under the very different circumstances of the præ-Tractarian epoch, was conferred on it by the State. In so far as the Church of England is prepared to express, and stand out for the religious demand of the nation, it will

be the case that the national character will be resumed ; in so far as the merely denominational, that is really as matters now stand, the Tractarian position, is adopted, that national character will be stultified. As a Christian Church the Church of England must insist on the necessity of a religious basis for morality, and therefore on the inclusion of religious instruction in the system of the national education. As the Established Church of a Protestant nation, the Church of England ought to constitute itself the champion and exponent of that fundamental Christianity which is common to Protestants and alone commends itself to the general acceptance of the English nation. I have already shown cause for thinking that this would be best represented by such simple Biblical instruction, as, avoiding denominational differences in childhood, would form a sound foundation for a healthy denominational Christianity in later years. By refusing to accept such instruction, and insisting upon a privileged position, the Church of England, assisted by the resentments and ambitions of party politics, never so powerful as on the morrow of a general election, might indeed succeed in perpetuating for a few years

a system, which could not possibly be permanent, because it would not really correspond with the facts of the national religion; but this temporary success would be purchased by the heavy price of secularism when, after an interval, the question was re-opened. In the retrospect it would be seen that the most potent factor in the process, by which the crime and folly of de-christianising English education had been effected, was the National Church itself! If, taking a more generous and a more worthy course, the Church of England shall exert itself to facilitate such a settlement of this obstinate problem as shall, so far as human wisdom can secure, reflect the general religious sense of the nation; and, in order to preserve a Christian basis for the training of the English people, shall be willing to sacrifice everything save the vital principle itself, I believe that not only will the Church of England approve itself to be a faithful guardian of the national conscience, but that it will have a great reward in the national gratitude. Nor need it be feared that the legitimate influence of the English Church would suffer. When all is said, the English clergy, distributed over the country, have it in their power to render

the greatest service to the national education, under whatever system it be carried on, *provided only that the system be genuinely Christian.* They are very commonly the best, often the only, local managers who can be relied upon for the conduct of the rural schools; they fashion, by a right which no legislation can affect, the tone of rural society; they have free access to the homes of the children. The teachers who for years to come will be charged with the task of education are the very teachers whom they have known in the close personal contact, which has obtained between clergy and teaching staff in well-worked denominational schools. The new generation of teachers will be friendly and responsive to their influence, just in proportion to the sympathy and confidence which they receive. I can see no limit to the beneficent consequences of a frank acceptance by the National Church of a truly national system of religious education. Thirteen years ago Archbishop Benson, in a charge addressed to his diocese, subsequently published under the title *Fishers of Men*, used language with respect to the Board Schools which may well be recalled now, when there seems no slight probability that

the system of the Board Schools so far as religious teaching is concerned may have a general extension to all the elementary schools of the country.

> "Churchmen must do their best in the most reverent, respectful, and honourable spirit to make Board Schools as religious and as good as possible. There are Board Schools with which our most acute and exacting inquirers declare themselves satisfied. There are many more in which the influence of the teachers is high and pure and strong."[1]

I believe that it lies in the power of the Church of England, acting in the spirit of the National Church of the English people, to secure that all the schools in the country should deserve so high a description. If only the State will create a system in which the fundamental Christianity of the nation can express itself, I do not think the Church of England ought to be in any doubt as to the obligation under which it stands to accept, facilitate, and work it honestly.

[1] Vide *Life*, vol. ii p. 668.

The mere fact of settling this long and disastrous conflict about religion in the schools would be, from the standpoint of the advocate of religion, of exceeding worth. Even an inferior system with peace would be worth more than a better system with the prospect of a renewal of hostilities. Every postponement of the final decision militates against the character of that decision, for every year adds to the number of wearied voters, who from sheer disgust of conflict incline to adopt that solution of the problem which, whatever its deeper defects may be, at least puts a final end to strife. Hitherto it has been the case that there has been no religious question within the schools, however angry the debate may have been outside them. The parents have manifested no signs of discontent with the system which has been provided for their children's education, whether that system be denominational or undenominational. This happy "Treuga Dei" within the schools will not continue: I think there are already signs that it is breaking down under the strain of these protracted controversies. When once the virus of religious conflicts profanes the elementary schools a gross wrong will have been inflicted on the

children, and a lasting wound inflicted on education.

As still charged with the character and possessed of the opportunities of the National Church, it appears to me that the most obvious and the most solemn obligation rests on the Church of England to facilitate a settlement. The only Anglican interest which is worth fighting for in this juncture is the broad interest of Christianity in the schools as the basis of the national education. That interest secured, we, the national clergy, ought to seek peace and ensue it.

APPENDIX

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

To all connected, by whatever tie, with S. Margaret's, Westminster

My dear Friends—The General Election has now been concluded, and we can again discuss questions of public interest without being suspected of a desire to serve some party interest. Accordingly, I venture to claim your attention for a few observations on a subject which, perhaps —if a large view of consequences be taken—is the most important of all the subjects with which the new Parliament must concern itself. The Education Act passed by the late Government has received, so far as its main lines are concerned, very general approbation, and we may assume that those general lines will not be disturbed; but it is notorious that the provisions which affected the non-provided schools have provoked extreme resentments, and cannot be sustained. Into the reasons why the Act has failed so completely to effect a settlement of the "religious difficulty," I do not suppose it requisite to enter. The fact, however explained, remains, and the less explanation the better, when feeling runs so high on the question. I ask myself, then, what are the fixed elements of any

arrangement which shall be equitable, and, because it is equitable, permanent, and I set down the following :—

I. All schools must be placed under complete popular control. In other words, there must be a final end of the distinction between State-schools and schools which, though maintained by the State, are in management and "atmosphere" denominational.

II. No teachers must henceforth be subject to denominational restrictions. Inasmuch as they are employed and paid by the State, they must come under the established condition of the State service.

III. No teacher, therefore, must be compelled to give religious instruction against his or her conscientious convictions. As it would be iniquitous to demand this of any teacher, so would it be repugnant to all right feeling to allow avowedly irreligious teachers to give religious teaching. Every teacher must be legally free to decline a task for which his or her personal convictions disqualify.

IV. Religious teaching must be included in the ordinary curriculum of the State-schools, and given by the regular staff of the schools, in so far as the members are not disqualified in conscience. I have pointed out on more than one occasion, and shown conclusively, that there is no reasonable probability of volunteers being found who would be competent to maintain discipline, numerous enough to take the whole work now being done in the State-schools, and leisured enough to give the requisite time.

V. Religious teaching, given in State-schools by State-appointed and State-paid teachers, must be such as the general body of citizens approves, and—inasmuch as the nation is generally Christian, though ecclesiastically divided —such general teaching must include the non-ecclesiastical elements of Christianity, which are also its fundamental

elements. Ecclesiastical or denominational teaching must clearly be left to the denominations who value it.

VI. Every parent must be free to secure for his children such religious teaching as he himself approves, and since it is probable that there are a certain number of ardent denominationalists, who regard all religious teaching as unacceptable and even mischievous which omits the specific tenets of their own denomination, it will be necessary to secure not only an efficient "conscience clause," but also reasonable facilities for providing denominational teaching by competent volunteers in the school fabrics and during the school hours.

VII. There must be no confiscation of denominational schools, but fair rents must be paid for the use of them for State purposes, or a fair price paid for their purchase by the State.

It has been often urged that any general scheme adapted to satisfy the requirements of the nation as a whole—and which, on that account, cannot but be broadly Christian and non-denominational—could not possibly meet the needs of Jews and Roman Catholics, whose denominationalism is of so intense and exclusive a type that it cannot be harmonised with any general teaching. It is to be remembered that there is nothing to hinder Parliament from excepting Jews and Roman Catholics from the general system, either by tolerating in their case the maintenance of voluntary schools, or by creating a special variety of State-schools for their use. In view of the low social level, and predominantly foreign nationality, of Roman Catholics in this country—I speak, of course, of the classes which use the State-schools—it might well appear a prudent course to accept some sacrifice of symmetry and some surrender of conventional democratic theory in order to

secure an efficient and acceptable education for them. I do not think the treatment of these alien minorities ought to prejudice the claims of the nation as a whole.

The objection has been urged that the religious state of the nation demands a denominational system, and that any attempt to establish a general scheme of Christian teaching is foredoomed to failure, because, in point of fact, it ignores the actual circumstances of English religion, which is incorrigibly denominational. This objection has figured so largely on political platforms that I cannot doubt that it has a large influence on many minds. I propose, therefore, to examine it with some care.

At first view the aspect of English Christianity almost prohibits hope of religious agreement, but a little examination will remove this impression. In point of fact, there are but two categories of Christians which need to be taken into consideration, as being so distinct from one another that the members of the one will "have no (religious) dealings" with the members of the other. There are the Christians who place the essence of Christianity in Church membership, and there are the Christians who place the essence of Christianity in personal discipleship. All Christians, of course, who are truly such, are both disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and members of His One Holy Catholic Church, but the principal emphasis may be laid either on the discipleship which implies the membership, or on the membership which presupposes the discipleship. The Roman Catholics and those Anglicans, who may not unfairly be said to accept the postulates of Roman Catholicism, represent the one category; the Nonconformists and the mass of Anglicans, who rejoice in the Protestant name and repudiate sacerdotalism in all its forms, represent the other.

It is the case—as our social students are accustomed to point out—that there is a curious inter-relation of denominations and classes. Roman Catholics may be left out of the argument, because they are mainly composed of a small section of the upper class and a considerable number of poor Irish and foreigners. The former do not use the State-schools, and the latter may advance a claim for special treatment. We shall not appreciate justly the facts to be reckoned with in any attempt at solving the problem of religion in the State-schools until we realise the connection of classes and denominations. The Anglican Sacerdotalists have their following mainly among a small section of the educated classes. There are some large congregations of "Ritualists" in the towns, and, wherever a popular clergyman has exerted himself to create a feeling on the subject, it is possibly the case that a preference for definitely denominational teaching of the sacerdotalist type may exist even among the poorer people; but, when all allowance is made for exceptions, it does not admit of reasonable question that the enormous proportion of those parents whose children use the State-schools are definitely hostile to sacerdotal teaching. I myself doubt whether it would be possible in any part of England and Wales to persuade an assembly of the parents of the children attending the elementary schools—always excepting the Roman Catholics—to approve the teaching and practice of the Confessional; yet every tyro in ecclesiastical politics knows that, from the sacerdotalist standpoint, these are the very essentials of religious training. It is, of course, notorious that this mass of Protestant Christians is divided among many denominations. The greater part, taking the country as a whole, unquestionably would describe themselves as members of the National Church; a large

number—including, I think, the most religious and the most vigorous of the working classes—would declare that they were members of one or other of the Nonconformist Churches. What is the relation which exists between these divisions? Are they parted by strong differences of belief? Do they follow distinctive modes of religious living? Are they absentees from one another's social intercourse? It only needs to ask these questions in order to answer them. It is notorious that denominational divisions are everywhere fluctuating and unreal. The law prohibits interchange of pulpits between Anglican and Nonconformist clergymen, but the interchange of congregations prevails, and nothing would better please the religious folk of the middle and lower classes than such an alteration of the existing law as would permit the clergy to treat their Nonconformist brethren as religious equals. The parents of the children who use the State-schools are in this sense "undenominational," that they worship without hesitation in church and chapel indiscriminately, use the same religious books, sing the same hymns, share the same standards of duty. It was stated by Sir John Gorst, speaking in Parliament as the representative of the Education Department, that there was no religious difficulty within the schools. This is the natural consequence of the fact that there is no religious difficulty among the parents of the children who use the schools. The protagonists of denominationalism are certainly earnest and estimable men, but they are ridiculously incompetent to represent the views of that section of the people which is directly interested in the State-schools. I will take a single example, which will universally be allowed to be an excellent specimen of its class.

On 17th January—in the very heart of the General

Election, when it had rather a forlorn appearance sandwiched between the records of overwhelming Ministerial majorities—there appeared a carefully written letter from the Bishop of Oxford under the heading, "Religious Education." I will select a single paragraph from this letter:—

> "Loyalty to those who have gone before us and the sense of our great duty in regard to the children of Church parents have impelled us to make great sacrifices that we might secure for such children instruction in the faith their parents hold."

It might fairly be asked of the Bishop what sacrifices they are, which the supporters of the denominational schools have made, which have not been made also by other citizens, who do not on that account claim any special credit or any particular advantage. Granting frankly the great services to national education which were rendered by the Church of England in days when the State had not begun to concern itself with the subject, it must be remembered that few persons now living can claim a share of the credit. Since the year 1870 the maintenance of the elementary schools has been part of the civic duty of all citizens, and the so-called "voluntary" subscriptions of the supporters of denominational schools have been a cheap alternative for the educational rates which, if the denominational schools had ceased to exist, they would assuredly have had to pay. It is surely, therefore, high time that the claim to extraordinary self-sacrifice should be dropped by the subscribers to denominational schools, who, if they would speak the truth, would acknowledge that, so far as they themselves are concerned, the most common motive of subscribing has been the prosaic and unheroical plea of

economy. At least it must be admitted that the character of extraordinary self-sacrifice only attaches to those subscriptions which have been contributed to the denominational schools within School Board areas—I mean the areas which used to be so described. But putting aside this claim to exceptional virtue based on economy, I would point to the delusion which colours the Bishop's language. His Lordship supposes that, in securing what he calls "Church teaching," he is preserving some treasured right to the parents of the children who attend the "Church schools" in his diocese. If indeed it were the parental faith which was taught in the elementary schools, there would be little enough heard of "Church teaching." Chillingworth's famous dictum—"The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the Religion of Protestants"—is certainly true of the parents of the children who use the elementary schools, and their attitude towards denominational beliefs is fairly described by his words :—

> "Whatever else they believe besides it, and the plain, irrefragable, indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold as a matter of opinion, but as matter of Faith and Religion, neither can they with coherence to their own grounds believe it themselves, nor require the belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption."

At least we may fairly claim of the Bishop that he shall be willing fairly to apply the principle that the religious teaching in the State-schools shall reflect the religious beliefs of the parents whose children attend them. That principle is manifestly inconsistent with the denominational ownership of the schools. For the zeal and money of a few enthusiastic plutocrats could

establish and maintain schools over whole districts where the resident population was altogether opposed to their denominational faith. This, in point of fact, is what has very generally happened. The "Church schools" have not come into existence to meet the denominational requirements of parents, but to satisfy the denominational conscience of "good Churchmen," who have conceived themselves bound to "spread the Gospel," as they themselves conceive of it, over the country. So long as the charge of maintaining these "missionary" schools was wholly, or even principally, borne by the founders, it was not substantially unreasonable that they should be allowed to "call the tune" of the religious teaching, but now that the entire cost of maintaining all the public elementary schools has been thrown on to public funds, it is plainly inequitable that the "missionary" character should be perpetuated. In Wales, in Cornwall, in the Eastern Counties, in Yorkshire, there are numerous "Church" schools attended almost wholly by Nonconformists, that is, by their children. With what face can it be pleaded that the maintenance of these schools is dictated by a zeal for the parental conscience? If the Church of England really stands on the principle that "children should be educated in the religion of their parents," she must begin by accepting parental choice as the authority which shall determine the character of the religious teaching given in her own schools, and to do this will necessitate the abolition of immense numbers of "Church schools," of all, in fact, which are mainly attended by the children of Nonconformist parents.

The English nation is religiously united, but ecclesiastically divided. The denominational divisions do not, for the most part, correspond with any distinction of

religious beliefs. Such distinction unquestionably severs the Roman Catholic or the Anglican Sacerdotalist from the Protestant, whether Anglican or Nonconformist, and the Unitarian or the Agnostic from the orthodox believer, but the mass of the people, whose children use the schools, are not Roman Catholics, or Anglican Sacerdotalists, or Unitarians, or Agnostics. They are orthodox Protestants, who regard one another—except possibly at election times —with the utmost friendliness. A form of religious teaching, which would satisfy the orthodox Protestants, would fairly correspond with the requirements of the nation. Can such a form be agreed upon?

It ought to be sufficient to reply that already such forms are in existence. Ten years ago the General Committee of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches "decided to undertake the preparation of a new Catechism which might meet the widespread, growing demand for a modern manual in the much-needed catechetical instruction of children; and might at the same time exhibit the substantial agreement of the Evangelical Free Churches in relation to the fundamental and essential truths of Christianity." We are assured that "the theologians who prepared this Catechism represented, directly or indirectly, the beliefs of not less, and probably many more, than sixty millions of avowed Christians in all parts of the world." The late Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, to whose enthusiasm and charity the whole project was mainly due, had reason to rejoice in the achievement. "In view," he writes in the explanatory note prefixed to the Catechism, "of the distressing controversies of our forefathers, it is profoundly significant and gladdening to be able to add that every question and every answer in this Catechism has been

finally adopted without a dissentient vote." The Church of England was not represented on the Committee which drew up the "Evangelical Free Church Catechism," but there does not appear to be anything in it which should have hindered co-operation. Four years ago—on 19th January 1902—I preached in S. Margaret's, on the first Sunday in Session, on "National Education," and in the course of my sermon I ventured to speak of this Catechism, and the words I used then appear to me still to be true:—

> "It consists," I said, "of fifty-two questions and answers, and, after reading it over thoughtfully more than once, I cannot discover a single answer which seems to me properly inconsistent with the Church Catechism, or unacceptable to the mass of English Churchmen. If that Catechism were honestly taught in the State-schools there would be no reason left for this weary struggle to maintain, as it were in opposition, a rival set of denominational schools. . . . I implore Nonconformists to believe that—whatever a handful of fanatics may write or say—we of the Church do earnestly desire to get into friendly relation with them on the question of the schools; we will not stand on denominational privileges; we are ready (as far as I can judge of our general feeling) to make great sacrifices of everything short of the principle at stake. I do not speak for myself only when I say that we desire the unification of the educational system on the basis of reasonable compromise. The obstacle to the final settlement of the issues at stake will not be found in us."

At the time when these words were spoken I still hoped that the Education Bill would have been so shaped in Parliament as to satisfy men of goodwill on both sides,

but in that hope I was mistaken. The forces of privilege and faction were stronger than I thought. Now the settlement of this long controversy has passed from the political party which may be said, speaking broadly, to represent Anglican interests, to that which, with equal propriety, may be said to represent the Nonconformist interests. Convinced as I am that any settlement which is to be final cannot possibly include any element of privilege, and will certainly not satisfy the zealots of parties and sects, I suppose that it is not unimportant to direct attention to the broad facts of English religion, and to plead that they be made the foundation for whatever fresh arrangements are attempted.

The Evangelical Free Church Catechism was drawn up without the aid of the oldest and most famous of Evangelical Churches, Mother of all the rest, the Church of England. There is another and similar compilation which does not lie open to this charge. I have recently drawn attention in the columns of the *Times* to the "Catechism for use in the Public Elementary Schools of Jamaica," which has been prepared by "a representative committee of Ministers of Religion," among whom the most conspicuous was the Archbishop of the West Indies. It would be money well spent if all of you would expend a few pence in purchasing these two Catechisms. The one can be obtained for one penny at the Memorial Hall, E.C., and the other at the "Jamaica Agency," 28 St. Bride Street, E.C. I am confident that, after reading these compilations, you will share the feeling of indignation which possesses me whenever I hear the religious disagreement of English Christians advanced as an argument for secular schools pure and simple, or for the continued maintenance of denominational privilege as an element of

the national system of education. The salient feature of the present situation is not the denominational disagreement, but the religious agreement. The statesman who will have the courage to ignore the first and give expression to the last is the statesman who will have the honour of solving the problem of religion in the State-schools. But he must be strong enough to treat with the contempt it deserves a vast amount of clerical abuse from both sides, and he will be well advised if he ceases to read the "religious newspapers."

Perhaps I ought not to omit some reference to the admittedly difficult point of securing sincerity in the religious teaching. Probably no argument appears more convincing, until it is examined, than that which urges the reasonableness of insisting upon some denominational test for the teachers. It offends every honest conscience that the faith and morals of the New Testament should be expounded to children by persons who disbelieve the one and disregard the other. But how shall this be avoided if there be no security taken from the teachers that they sincerely accept both? We may emphasise the fact, familiar enough in other connections, that of all methods for securing sincerity the most helpless is that of exacting doctrinal subscriptions. For in doing so you are wholly at the mercy of the individual whom you desire to test. If he is sincere, your subscriptions are superfluous; if he is not sincere, they are futile. From that dilemma there is no escape. It argues a complete misunderstanding of the subject to suppose a parallel between religion and the other parts of the school curriculum. With respect to the latter, you can ensure efficiency by certificates; with respect to the former, certificates of what is called "religious knowledge" are almost worthless. In the

one case the main thing is to fill the child's memory with the necessary facts, and to train the child's intellect in the understanding of them. In the other case the object aimed at is far more important, and vastly less simple. The main thing is to shape the child's character, and to give him sound principles of conduct and worthy ideals of life. In this work the sincerity of the teacher's convictions, and the nobility of his example, are more important than the accuracy of his knowledge. The essential thing is to get the religious teaching given by sincerely religious persons, and this will certainly not be secured by denominational tests, and may very probably be better secured without them. It must be assumed that the elementary teachers reflect the religious condition of the classes from which they come. On this assumption it will be the case that they have a very lax standard of denominational loyalty and a very strong grasp of certain beliefs common to all Evangelical Christians. Give them the opportunity of making their religious teaching matter of conscience, and you have the only security for its sincerity which is worth having. I do not see any effective objection to giving the teachers a statutory right to decline, on conscientious grounds, the duty of giving religious instruction. In country schools, where only a single teacher was employed, it would no doubt be found desirable to appoint some one who would feel free to teach, but the number of teachers likely to claim exemption would probably be as small as the number of children likely to be withdrawn from all religious instruction: and it could not be difficult for the local authorities to arrange that these teachers were placed in larger schools, where the specific difficulty would not emerge. It cannot be seriously argued that the determining factor in the settlement of the educational

arrangements of the nation ought to be the scruples or interests of a tiny minority of the teachers.

I will bring this letter to a close by reproducing the concluding words of the sermon to which I have already alluded, and which seem to me still to retain relevance to the political situation, in spite of the dramatic alteration which has just taken place.

> "We have the opportunity now of creating one national system which shall absorb the denominational schools without injustice, by frankly accepting the principle which those schools represent; we can now, if we will, remove from the body politic a civic hardship, which, for a whole generation, has oppressed and exasperated great numbers of good citizens; we can now, if we will, make an end of a continuous and long-standing quarrel between Churchmen and Nonconformists, and thus at last make possible their frank co-operation in the holy and necessary work of bringing the faith and morals of the Gospel into the national life. I pray God that the supreme interest of the national education may no longer be sacrificed to the miserable fanaticisms of political partisanship, and the still more disgraceful jealousies of religious sectarianism."

I am always

Your faithful Friend and Servant,

H. HENSLEY HENSON.

February 1, 1906.

Printed by R. & R. Clark, Limited, *Edinburgh.*

WORKS BY

Canon H. HENSLEY HENSON

8vo. Sewed. 1*s. net.*

SERMON ON THE DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA

Globe 8vo. 1*s. net.*

SINCERITY AND SUBSCRIPTION

A PLEA FOR TOLERATION IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

THE VALUE OF THE BIBLE

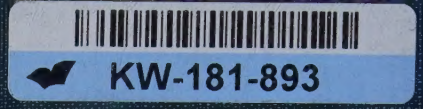
AND OTHER SERMONS (1902-1904)

With a Letter to the Lord Bishop of London.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND PULPIT.—"We can recommend this work to our readers with the conviction that if more preachers were as broad-minded and as outspoken as the Rector of S. Margaret's, Westminster, there would be no lack of large congregations in our London churches."

GUARDIAN.—"It is plain from several of those in the second and third divisions of the book that Canon Henson is a sincere and earnest preacher of righteousness, with a very whole-hearted hatred of evil, and a power of bringing the principles and truths of Holy Scripture very closely into relation with the tendencies and temptations of the present day."

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.


KW-181-893